# Hearts' Haven

KATHARINE EVANS BLAKE

# HEARTS' HAVEN

"MY SON!" HE SAID, ADDRESSING HUGH, "WHY DID NOT YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU MEANT TO DO?" *See page 311*

# HEARTS' HAVEN

*By*
KATHARINE EVANS BLAKE

*Illustrated by*
E. M. ASHE

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# HEARTS' HAVEN

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## FOREWORD

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,
To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night,
Thou makest the heaven thou hopest indeed thy home.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Since the first exiles sat, homesick for the lost Garden of Eden, and recounted its glories to their descendants, the race of man has "clung with yearning hope which would not die" to the promise of restoration to a Paradise into which neither pain nor care, hatred nor struggle, can enter; where all are bound together in the tie of brotherhood, and the days slip by in heavenly peace, while the soul stretches its wings and grows to godlike stature.

The night of the ancient world was starred by dreams of Atalantis. Ulysses sailed for the Happy Isles; King Arthur longed for the "Island Valley of Avalon"; Columbus sought a New World, De Leon a Fountain of Youth; but it was ever the same dream, or remembrance, that has bound the high-souled of each succeeding generation in a long line of prophets and guides — saviors of the lost and mistaken race of man.

At the close of the eighteenth century this world-old dream took a new form in the mind of George Rapp, a weaver of Würtemberg, in Germany. His was the vision of a religious commonwealth, which was to be the nucleus of a New Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth, when Christ should come again to reign over men. He brought his disciples over the sea, and, choosing a little valley among the Pennsylvania hills for his ideal community, builded it with such wisdom that men saw in it, for many years, the resurrection of the lost Eden of the race.

Among his earlier converts was another dreamer of the sweet old dream — Laurence von Korassel, Count of Rosenthor. He was rich in the gifts of nature,— cultured, noble-minded, a very darling of Fortune, who had ignored her favors all his life for this alluring dream of regenerating society, and wiping away the sorrows and inequalities of human fate. Wandering restlessly over Europe, in pursuit of it, he came one day to Würtemberg, and chanced to hear a sermon by the inspired weaver. On the instant his dreams, his seeking, his unappeasable hunger for he knew not what, were justified and quieted. He joined the Rappites and hastened to the castle of Rosenthor, that he might renounce it and his title, and be free to follow his new star.

It was characteristic of his impetuous and self-absorbed nature that he thought little of the difficulties in his way until he faced them. The greatest

of these was a wife. He had met Leah Gordon at a small German court, where her father represented the American government. Handsome, brilliant, with the unaccountable charm of a constitutional melancholy, Count von Korassel created a boundless disturbance in the hearts of fair and fervid creatures wherever he went, but until he met this young American, his own heart slept, safe in its envelop of dreams. He had married in early manhood a gentle cousin, who had died, leaving him a son. At thirty, he met Leah Gordon. Her vivid and joyous temperament, her virginal pride, and above all, the secret influence of her own feeling for him, awoke him from dreams of social reform to the possibilities of love. But the dreams were the habit of his nature; the love a passing interest. In less than a year after their marriage, the old ideas repossessed him and led him to George Rapp and the new sect of the Harmonists.

The child of the former marriage could not impede the father's plans; he had spent his life in the care of an uncle at Rosenthor, and might still remain there. The title and ancestral obligations were easily renounced. But the wife?

Leah von Korassel set all her charm, her beauty, her keen intelligence, her love — every grace and gift she had — against this new cult of her husband's; and she failed. Young, proud, petted, hungry for the joy of life, she found herself between abysmal depths — desertion, and the loss of her husband's love upon

one side of her; an ascetic, laborious life in a community of fanatic peasants upon the other. In bitterness and rebellion, she made her choice, if choice it could be called, joined the Rappite colony, and went with her husband to America.

# CHAPTER I

## THE COMMUNITY AND THE REBELS

O Christ of the seven wounds, who look'st through the dark
To the face of Thy mother! Consider, I pray,
How we common mothers stand desolate.

MRS. BROWNING.

Harmonie, the first village of the Rappite community, lay deep among the Pennsylvania hills in a charming seclusion and peace. Sometimes the stage, coming down the white post-road which led into and through the valley, dropped a traveler at the Gasthaus; letters came at intervals, and, more frequently, the wagons of the community passed over the hills, carrying the products of Harmonie to Pittsburg; but none of these things brought the communists into any vital contact with the world. They lived here, as upon some island of the uncharted seas — beyond the reach of the sorrows, the strife, and the intrusive interests of the life from which they had fled.

They held all things in common, they worked together for the general good, they cherished the feeling of brotherhood, and they lived in the constant expectation of the second advent of Christ, when they were to go with Him to the Land of Canaan, there

to establish, in His name, the New Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth.

The acumen and devotion of their leader, George Rapp, and their own obedience and thrift brought them phenomenal prosperity. No care for the present, no fear for the future diverted their attention from spiritual things. They were able to gratify every want of the body with a simple and wholesome abundance. When the fat cattle were slain and dressed by the butcher brothers, a lad went from house to house, knocking upon the walls and crying:

"Come, all who want fresh meat!"

The tailor brothers watched the garments with a jealous care, insistent upon renewals that the community might not be ashamed for its members, and the shoe-making brothers looked after the foot-wear with the same solicitude. The simplicity of Arcadia, the equality and justice of Atalantis, the abundance of El Dorado, if not its luxury, were all realized in this community, where one of the last of the dreamers had embodied the old dream.

Upon a summer afternoon, in hay-making time, the brothers and sisters who had been at work in the field came home early because of the heat, and were lingering in little friendly groups along the broad, shady streets to talk with the sisters who had remained in the village, and were sitting now in the blossomy gardens at their needlework.

These Harmonists, or Rappites, were sturdy German peasants, farmers, and mechanics. Their faces were ruddy and cheerful, but they were refined by much thought upon spiritual things, and purified by sacrifice and high aims. The brothers wore steeple-crowned hats of plaited straw, smocks of coarse, pale-blue cotton, and trousers of copperas-dyed homespun. Some of the sisters were young and winsome, some were old, or plain, and many had a pathetic sweetness of expression, but there was not an ill-natured or sullen face among them. They, also, wore broad hats of yellow straw which they tied down over the ears with muslin strings, knotted demurely under the chin, or, coquettishly, at the nape of the neck. Their skirts were full and short, and of a rich dull blue in color, and, because of the heat, they had substituted loose sacques of white linen for the usual trim blue bodice. Their feet were clad in low buckled shoes and open-worked stockings of their own knitting.

In the front yard of the Gasthaus, Sister Drusia was hovering over her flowers, setting little tents of catalpa and white mulberry leaves to shelter the tenderest from the sun. She was a tiny creature, with a peculiar lightness and daintiness in her figure, though it was bent with age and twisted by years of cruel physical pain. She looked up to see a group of the harvesters approaching the Gasthaus fence, and she fluttered into the little orchard behind the inn, where Sister Bena was boiling pear-butter.

The huge brass kettle was swung from a pole supported in the forks of a pair of young trees set firmly in the ground. The butter had been boiling since morning, and was simmering now with a murmur like a purr. It was of a rich yellow-red, like a carnelian for color, and it sent up clouds of fragrance to hover in the trees that had produced the blossom and the fruit.

"O Sister," cried Drusia, "some are coming this way! Brother Hanno, Lanie, and sisters Tamar and Martha. Can it be that anything has happened? I dreamed last night of a festival; was that not strange? And, Sister, I hope you will not mind, but the pear-butter has splashed upon your apron,— will you take mine? It is a fresh one and I can get me another before they see me."

Bena smilingly accepted the exchange, and Drusia fluttered excitedly into the Gasthaus. By this time, the sisters and Hanno Tauffé, the band-master, had halted in the shade of a linden tree and were expressing interest in the pear-butter. Bena thrust her long wooden paddle into it, then held it up that they might see the heavy globules that fell back into the kettle with a hiss.

"Do you think it is about as the brothers will like it?" she asked.

"Does it spin a thread yet?" inquired Sister Tamar, in her eager, capable way. "If it does, take it up at once, or it will grain in the jars."

"Oh, it is too bad if you have overboiled it!" said Martha, looking over at the kettle, her melancholy brown eyes full of reproach.

"I do not overboil things," answered Sister Bena sternly, while she drew the coals from under the kettle and spread them in the grass, where they slowly faded and died, like flowers. Drusia came out, smoothing the fresh apron, and, seeing the flush upon Bena's delicate old face, was instantly all a-quiver from fear of ill-feeling and the wish to banish it. She raised herself upon her toes and peered into the kettle, judging the mixture with a competent eye.

"Oh, it is beautiful, Sister! You have the strangest luck with preserves! Would you not like it, now, if Brother Hanno would carry a bowl of it to Number Three? Perhaps poor Sister Leah may be tempted by it; they say she eats nothing."

"You have right, Sister," said Hanno heartily in the German idiom he still retained. "'Good food is good heart-salve,' the Dutch say."

"It is an obedient and humble spirit that Sister Leah needs, and not more indulgence in her stubbornness," said Martha severely.

"God is patient with the young," said Drusia softly, "and this one has had few sorrows to bend her to His will. Her life has been different from ours — and who knows how hard she may be striving to give up her child?"

"I pity her," said Tamar, "but more I pity

Brother Laurence; he is a saint, weaned entirely from the world and its carnal affections, and it must trouble him sorely that his wife should be so stubborn and worldly-hearted."

A short and discourteous expression burst from Hanno's lips, and he walked away and spit into a bed of petunias across the fence; then for all his elaborate effort at self-repression, he returned to the sisters and spoke his mind:

"Keep your pity for those with human hearts. Laurence von Korassel's is dry and dusty as an old puff-ball! Ach, Father of the Cruel! If I were over the hill yonder, out of sight of Harmonie, I should burn out the bitter taste his name leaves in my mouth with some of the manly oaths that I learned among the Legionaries. In all the countries where we followed the Emperor, I saw women with children, and, whether she were a Russ, a Prussian, or a black Egyptian, the mother clung always to her child. 'He who comes between two fires may scorch his skin,' I say, and so would I tell Father Rapp, had he the heart of flesh!"

"What are you, to question Father Rapp's acts?" cried Bena.

"Oh, only a man, and not one with the courage to go against nature. You may blaze up, Sister, like tow, but even Father Rapp would go softly about it to take away the child of Bena Veneno, if she had one." He bowed, with the ceremony which no other

man at Harmonie used toward the sisters, and went away while he was still triumphant.

Bena was as rosy as a girl under the white shadow of her cap frills, and busied herself unnecessarily with the pear-butter, until Sister Tamar made a diversion by remarking:

"We met the elders going to the Great House, and Brother Laurence was with them."

"Now that is strange!" mused Drusia. "One would think he would not wish to inflict the sorrow himself!"

"But he is not one to shrink from a duty, because it is hard. He wishes not that any should think him in sympathy with Sister Leah in her rebellion," said Tamar.

Bena stood looking down into the village. Though she would not have acknowledged it, Hanno's words had changed her attitude toward the woman whom the others condemned. She knew in her heart that, had she had the ties of wifehood and motherhood, no creed, and no law, could have wrenched her own from her. She could see the deputation, of which they had spoken, come out of the Great House gate on its way to the nursery. Her eyes sped past the commanding figure of George Rapp at its head, and rested upon that of Brother Laurence, who came next. His beautiful, poetic head was bowed in the shadow of his great black hat. His long black silk coat clung around him, accenting the emaciation

of his figure, and his wavering gait. His shoulders drooped inertly, and his long white hands hung listlessly at his side, with the same suggestion of an alienated spirit in a disregarded body. Her eye returned, for contrast, to the vigorous figure of George Rapp, and she smiled at the swing of his broad shoulders and the carriage of his great, rugged head. The other members of the deputation crossed her vision like shadows; seven brothers clad in the ceremonial garb of the Rappites — black, ungraceful figures, bearing themselves pompously in a moment of brief authority, from Brother Henrici, who was a giant in strength and stature, to little Brother Christopher, who brought up the rear, trotting after the others like some intrusive and apologetic boy.

The group of sisters at the fence watched the procession in silence. Martha had a look of gloom, Tamar and little black-eyed Lanie were stern, Bena, rebellious in thought. Only Drusia's face was soft and sweet; she was not thinking of the purpose of the deputation, but was following the little figure of Brother Christopher with adoring eyes.

And, indeed, this visit to the nursery was a critical point in the history of Harmonie. Upon it, and the events to which it was to give rise, hung the future policy and the ultimate fate of their community and their sect. And yet, it was one of those human events so compounded of littleness and greatness that a philosopher, from his vantage

ground of impersonal interest, might easily have smiled and missed its significance.

Leah von Korassel was a Rappite in name only. She had borne without complaint the life so foreign to her training and her tastes, she had humbly associated with her lowly fellows, she had meekly assumed her share of the common labor; but she had done all this in bitterness and disgust. At first, she had hoped to hold her husband's love by this stupendous sacrifice, but he became daily more of a mystic and a recluse, and despair closed around her, numbing or destroying all that had been bright and energetic in her character.

The economic side of the communal life had quickly exhausted Laurence von Korassel's interest; but the spiritual side, the religious mysticism, spiritism, the consonance of physical and psychic phenomena, and other strange dim beliefs which the Rappites held with greater or less understanding of them, had attracted and absorbed his mind. When Leah gave birth to a son he awoke to a sharp paternal emotion. But conscience repudiated this sentiment, and finally subdued it, and the poor mother saw him slip gradually back into his former alienation from all natural interests. Nor was this agony the extent of what the community was to require of her.

The Harmonists had emigrated to America in families, and had, at first, continued the relations of their former life. But it soon became evident that

family ties were antagonistic to community of interests, and the leader looked forward to the time when he might bring about their abolition. In the beginning, however, he was able to do no more than to persuade his disciples to bring all the children up together, in ignorance of family ties.

The common nursery was a log house in the center of the village of Harmonie. It was set in a charming little garden of fruit and ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers. It was a cheerful place, glittering with cleanliness, and lovingly furnished with the belongings of childhood, all fashioned in the highest art of the Harmonie craftsmen. The cradles were of the rarest woods, carved and graceful; spread with the whitest and finest linens, couched with down, and covered with blankets of lamb's wool, intricately embroidered. In a deep brass-bound chest, which had come from the fatherland, lay a store of baby linen upon which the weavers and knitters, the lace-makers and needle-workers had lavished their skill. The mothers who had stitched these little garments knew well that it must be by chance only, and very rarely, that any woman's handiwork should deck her own baby; for here the mother-love must yield to higher things. And yet, it did not wholly yield, for the Harmonie nursery was the heart center of the community; the secret altar where a flame still burned to the repudiated parental affections.

When Leah von Korassel's child had reached the

age of three weeks, she was ordered to relinquish it to the common care. It was what the other mothers of Harmonie had done with no outward show of reluctance, and while her rebellion against the common fate was treated leniently, she was made to feel that she had no choice but to yield. Father Rapp listened to her pleadings that she might keep her child, with tears in his eyes and infinite tenderness and patience, but he was inexorable.

To her husband she made no appeal. He held himself aloof from her struggle, and kept silent, growing daily more haggard, aging visibly, and seeking with almost insane ardor to lose his sense of the present in dreams and religious mysteries. Worn with the sufferings of her sad wifehood, and those of maternity; young, inexperienced, and alone among aliens, she succumbed at last, and gave up the child.

But Nature has many resources. The child himself took up the struggle. Through the mother's resistance and the pity of her fellow communists he was left for a longer time than was usual in her care; still he was less than three months old when brought to the nursery. He was a small, soft creature, with nothing about him to proclaim that here was a doughty and dangerous champion of individual rights. It was the rule for the mothers of the village to drop into the nursery at intervals and to offer their breasts to any child that hungered (there was an unwritten law that no mother should suckle her own).

The plump and rosy German babies drank heartily from any fount, but little Hugh von Korassel would have none of this common maternity. Nor was this his only rebellion. He would not lie quiet, sucking his thumb in ruminant content, as the others did, but must be noticed and entertained, making such a piteous ado when left to himself that the soft-hearted sisters in charge gave him an undue share of attention.

For a time the pale young mother was permitted to come to the nursery for fleeting moments of a joy that was more than half sorrow; but, soon, the patient Rappite women began to suffer the pangs of jealousy.

"Was it just that Sister Leah, alone, should be permitted to nurse her child? Was it right that Trudchen and Elsie, John, and little Luttera should lie unnoticed just because they were good, while the babe of this unfaithful sister had so much tending?"

These complaints led to the selection of a deputation of brothers, which was to lay the matter before Father Rapp. When they met at the Great House, Brother Henrici argued that discrimination in the treatment of babes, preferring one above the other, must lead to that very inequality of persons and conditions which Harmonie had been created to rebuke. Brother Fabian said gently that Sister Leah was young, and perhaps it would be wiser to appoint a season of prayer that she might be strengthened to

do her duty, before dealing harshly with her. Little Brother Christopher sat in a corner, furtively drying his tears, and could not speak at all. Brother Laurence, who had not been invited to join the deputation, electrified them all by rising at this juncture and urging Father Rapp to the plain duty of dealing quickly and decisively with the rebellious woman.

"It is for the good of her soul," he continued. "She is proud and has a persistent will; she will not yield to gentle measures; do not hope it. She has already been permitted to indulge a carnal passion in the nursing of her child, to the endangering of her whole spiritual life. All other things must be removed from her, that she may fix her affections wholly upon Christ, and devote her energies to making ready for His coming."

Father Rapp listened with bowed head; whatever of pity or shrinking was in his face, the brothers saw none of it. Presently, he arose and led them to the nursery.

They found Sister Margreta in charge, sitting beside little Hugh's cradle, rocking it and singing while she sewed. The child, unable as yet to sit upright, was propped with pillows; for already he wished to see what was going on in the world, and vociferously refused to lie upon his back and stare at the ceiling, as the other babies did.

The solemn black-clad brothers filed into the room and ranged themselves around the wall. Even in

her fright and excitement, Margreta stole a glance at Brother Laurence, and told many times thereafter how cold and calm he stood beside his child and made no sign of a father's interest in him. But Margreta's eyes could not penetrate to the soul of the man, nor see the struggle that waged there.

George Rapp leaned over the cradle. This was a charming baby, with clear features, a nobly-shaped head, wonderful blue eyes, and a dazzling fairness and daintiness of skin. He met the gaze of the Rappite leader with one as full of intelligent interest, and gave him a fleeting smile, so sweet that the man's heart swelled with a sudden tenderness and he was tempted to run away without performing his task.

"Why do you rock and sing to this child more than to the others, Sister?"

"He will have it, Father, he will not bear to be left alone."

"Nonsense! A babe is easily managed. Give him no more attention than you give others hereafter. And Sister Leah must obey and give him up to the community."

"But he will not bear not to be tended and amused! He will cry himself sick! And he will never touch another woman's breast; he will pine and die without his mother!"

Sister Margreta was white and trembling. It was a bold thing to withstand Father Rapp, and here were the elders also, but she loved the child, and, being

herself an unmarried woman, had suffered only pangs of helpless pity at the sight of Sister Leah in the exercise of her restricted motherhood.

"And now," Father Rapp commanded, "call one of the nursing women. We are here to see that this child is fed as the others are."

Sister Sophia was called in from the flower garden. She was young, comely, and tender; no more acceptable nurse could have been found, it seemed to Father Rapp, and he seated himself, confident of seeing the subjection of the little rebel.

The baby smiled when Sister Sophia took him up. With pretty coaxing she opened her kerchief and offered her breast. The beautiful eyes of the child widened with fear, and he drew back to the limits of her clasp. She pressed him closer, coaxing tenderly, but he struggled, and, finally, stiffening his little body, he uttered shriek after shriek of rage. Sister Sophia looked resentfully at Father Rapp.

"You see? He always acts in this way."

"Put him to the breast again," he answered grimly.

She did so, and the struggle was repeated. Presently the child was exhausted and lay panting in Sister Sophia's arms. She pleaded for the little rebel, with tears streaming down her face. But Father Rapp, whose love of a contest grew as it waged, urged her to attempt once more to subdue this valiant little opponent. This time, the baby, too spent for any other form of resistance, stubbornly closed his

lips. Father Rapp, as tenderly as he could, pressed the delicate nostrils together, and, opening his mouth in order to breathe, the child was compelled to swallow the alien fluid.

At that instant Leah von Korassel rushed into the room.

"What have you done to my child?" she shrieked.

The baby was lying ghastly and rigid across Sister Sophia's lap in a spasm of nausea. Already purple shadows had gathered around his half-closed eyes, and his lips were set in a strange, unchildlike line. One glance at the tiny face unnerved Father Rapp, and, heart-sick with regret and fear, he passed humbly out of the nursery, followed by the crestfallen brothers, who were equally eager to escape the pale faces and accusing eyes of the sisters.

"WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY CHILD?" SHE SHRIEKED *Page 30*

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONVERT

We count them happy who have richly known
The sweets of life.
We count them happy, yet not these alone.
There is a Crown of Thorns, Way of the Cross,
Consuming fire that burns the spirit pure.

KATHERINE LEE BATES.

As both temporal and spiritual head of the community, George Rapp had many cares, and knew what it was to spend wakeful nights in their company. On this August night after his conflict in the nursery, he could neither keep his bed nor his room, but went through the sleeping village, carrying his care with him, to the woods that fringed the creek. From them he saw the community lands bathed in moonlight so rich as to be almost golden. They were goodly lands, and well tilled, and his heart swelled as he looked upon them.

Presently, something white drifted toward him, along the lane leading between the wheat-fields to the creek. Nearer, the figure took the outlines of a woman. The white draperies blown backward by the gentle night wind, the small head coifed in a white scarf drawn severely over it and about the clear lines

of the shoulders, made him think of the mother of Jesus. For a moment he wondered if he were about to have a divine revelation from this source; for he was a mystic and lived in the secret expectation of communion with angels.

The trembling ecstasy passed when, the woman pausing in the shade of the cotton-woods so near him that he might have touched her, a soft, dove-like cooing fell on his ear, and he saw that, folded close in the shawl, she pressed a child to her bosom. He hesitated in ill-defined awe, then emerged from the shadows and spoke:

"What brings you here at such an hour, my Sister?"

She turned and fled from him along the creek bank, but she was clearly unfamiliar with the rough path, and stumbled and swerved. He followed swiftly, calling to her in that commanding tone which men seldom found the strength to disobey; the woman halted, poised as if for flight, unwilling, and ready to break away. When he saw her face he controlled himself with difficulty, for he recognized Leah von Korassel.

They stood in silence, broken only by the lap of the creek and her panting breath. He dared not speak; the situation was too mysterious, too threatening. With the patience that was a part of his power, he waited. She, spent and driven to bay, rushed into impetuous speech:

"Why have you followed me?"

"God sent me here, Sister, unknowingly."

"God! God!" she cried bitterly.

"You are weak, and the child is heavy; give him to me and lean upon me while we climb out of the unhealthful atmosphere of the creek bottoms. We will rest upon the hill, yonder, while you tell me all that is in your heart," he said soothingly.

"I can not. You are neither a deceived woman, nor a deserted wife, nor a robbed mother! If I could tell you all that is in my heart it would embitter your thoughts for ever!" she answered vehemently.

"It might sadden them — for so long as I live," he said gently.

"Oh, if I might! But no, I have no wish to afflict another."

"Nor have I, Sister. Will you not permit me to carry the child?"

The baby stirred against her breast, and the mother lifted the shawl. The little face seemed to radiate the moonlight. At the sight of it George Rapp's heart swelled with the tenderness that had possessed it that afternoon, in the nursery. He took the child gently into his arms, and supported the mother to a grassy knoll that seemed to be almost warm in the moonlight. When they were seated Leah took off the shawl, and, with the deft tenderness of a woman, he wrapped the tiny body warmly, and folded it to his breast.

"You go away, Sister, because you will not give up the child to the community?"

"I can not. The child is mine. God gave it to me."

"But it has a father also. Will he yield it up to the world?"

She shuddered, and, with a return of her fear and suspicion, she snatched the child from him, caressing it with a wild passion of recovery.

George Rapp waited for the iron to enter her soul. She could not know what it cost him to torture her, but turned upon him, like any hunted creature, and strove to pierce and wound him with her agony. When she paused from exhaustion he said humbly:

"All this for me, Sister, and I accept it. What is there for this helpless child, whose fate lies in your hands? You would take him away — fatherless. You would rear him in a world of strife, sin, want. What account could you render to him for all with which you would afflict him? What account to God for the soul that you would endanger — were you permitted to take him away from Harmonie?"

The mother sat shuddering, and could not reply. Presently he went on, more tenderly:

"It is a bitter trial to the carnal heart, Sister, but there is support in the spiritual nature. Give your child to God, and your own soul to His law, and the pangs of sacrifice shall become joys."

Leah von Korassel had ceased to resist. Even her

overwrought body yielded, and she sank against Father Rapp's shoulder with a sigh of surrender. He took the baby into his arms again, and began to talk tenderly and soothingly of another mother, who knew, from the beginning, that the child she was to bear must be given up to God and the world; who foresaw the agony and the sacrifice, yet accepted her lot with such a holy courage that the Angel of Annunciation, even from the heights of his celestial nature, saw and wondered, bowing himself to utter that commendation which shall be the glory of womanhood for ever:

"'Blessed art thou among women!'"

George Rapp repeated it in his deep-toned and thrilling voice, which flowed into the soul of the yielding woman like balm. Love had deceived her. Motherhood had been but the struggle of contending tortures. The vanity and the hunger of life were burned out of her. Passion and struggle had destroyed her youth. But here, at last, was something great, and stable, and satisfying,— sacrifice, self-devotion, and the spiritual life, with its inviolable peace. Her soul surrendered itself without a reservation. She did not even give the last mother's kiss to the sleeping child, but arose, calm and resolute.

"I obey," she said, and walked in silence beside Father Rapp as he carried the little unconscious sacrifice back to the nursery.

Leah von Korassel threw herself into the spiritual life with all the ardor of her nature. She seemed to forget her wifehood and her motherhood, or to divert all the emotion that she had once poured into these relations to the new channels of religion. She met Laurence von Korassel daily, as safe in her oblivion to all that he had been to her, as a nun in her cloister. She saw her child, pining in the care of aliens, and betrayed no interest in his fate.

In the following winter, a revival of religion swept over the community. One bitter night, when the air was light and dry with the intense cold, when the clouds seemed to be frozen out of the sky, leaving only depths of glittering and deepening blue, against which the stars were set, naked and dazzling; when the roads and hedge-rows and dividing fences were obliterated by the snow, and all the landscape changed by its enchantment, and the silence was broken only by the riving and creaking of freezing trees, Leah von Korassel arose among the sisters in the church and asked leave to speak. Her spirituality shone through her beauty like an inner flame. Her voice was sweet with the cadence of past sorrows, her words flowed as swiftly and smoothly as an unfettered stream, while she uttered the thoughts which her agony of renunciation and her subsequent religious ecstasies had engendered.

She painted the relation of mother and child; the pride of possession, the haunting fears and vaulting

ambitions, and self-sacrificing tenderness of the one; the dependence and affection of the other, until these bereft mothers recalled their own joys and their bereavements with tears and heart-burnings. Then she described the tortures of this sacrifice; the waking in the night to the dream of a lonely child's piercing cries, the desolation of the empty arms, the fierce jealousy of those who had usurped the mother's precious cares, to women who had endured them all — inarticulate, helpless, yet for conscience' sake, willingly.

When their sobs were dying away under the soothing tones of her voice, she went on to tell of Mary, the mother who had known these things in their fullness, and she exalted the experience of these simple German women by the parallel. With an eloquence no less touching, she reminded them of their persecutions in Germany, their separation from native land and kindred, their painful toil in an unsettled country, and their sufferings from pioneer conditions. Then, her beautiful exalted face alight with holy energy, her deeply blue eyes scintillating with spiritual fire, her soft voice searching and thrilling, she spoke of the cause for which they had endured it all. Religious freedom, the brotherhood of man, the purification of the world in preparation for the coming of its Master, loomed before her hearers in mighty proportions. When she paused to ask what obstacles stopped the progress of these great things, and

pointed out that conjugal affection, the parental bond, all the ties that absorb the love of man, clog and impede his aspiring soul, she carried the entire congregation with her. The carnal affections became as chaff in the fire of the zeal which she kindled when, bending forward, she asked persuasively:

"Are we not willing, then, to lay wifehood and the tie of the husband, yea, even motherhood and fatherhood, upon the altar of Christ?"

A deep, assenting murmur ran through the church. George Rapp, glowing with the triumph of an idea which he had long secretly nursed, and often attempted to advance, arose, and, speaking with that full utterance which moved men as the wind moves the field of ripened wheat, said:

"My children, I have opened a new book before you, a book of the vows of the Harmonists. Come, then, and set your names to this sacred vow of celibacy, renouncing the most precious things of this world in order to further the Coming of Christ, and His Kingdom upon earth."

Without looking toward the benches where their faithful wives sat, the men crowded eagerly forward to sign; without a glance at beloved husbands, without a thought of their children, the women followed, dry-eyed, glowing with religious fervor, and willingly set their names to the vow of celibacy, which in all the future history of the Harmonists, whether in Pennsylvania or Indiana, was sacredly kept.

## CHAPTER III

### THE APOSTATE

> Wronged and wrong-doer each with meekened face
> And cold hands folded over a still heart,
> Pass the green threshold of our common grave,
> Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart.
>
> WHITTIER.

"Ring, ring! Burst thyself and thou wilt, but Band-master Tauffé rises not for your clamor!"

Brother Hanno turned himself petulantly in his bed, and drew the pillow over his ears to shut out the voice of the morning bell.

"Is it not enough to have torment all night from the storm? And to come near dying of over-ripe watermelon, besides the sciatica that I got while lying behind the fence awaiting the chance to pluck it? Herr Nick! but Jung Scheller will rage when he misses it! But he must cool off in the same skin he gets hot in — little pot always boiling over, that he is!

"But me! I am tired of these Rappites and their prayers and their labors never-ended. How many years now have I slaved for them — I, their band-master? I, Hanno Tauffé, soldier of France, who

have marched with the great Little Emperor, and seen Germans fall like pigs at killing season! Ach, but it is true! My temper is worn as thin as the parson's breeches, in the labor of teaching them to play tunes. They are poor ducks that must be taught to swim! And there is quick French blood in my veins, and enough of nimble Frenchman's wit in my head to furnish all their thick skulls with sense, and here I stay until I am in danger of becoming a stupid German nun like the others! 'Lie with dogs and rise with fleas!'

"Doubtless the village is all a-litter from the storm, and the brothers are busy at the clearing of it — but not I! 'Make yourself an ass and every one will lay his pack upon you,' and I have done that too long. 'But he who has burned his mouth learns to blow his soup,' and I am determined to work no more. Here I lie, like mine Herr Burgomaster, and take mine ease while others work."

He turned his round old body again, stirring up a pain, reminiscent of the stolen melon, and composed himself to slumber.

Hanno was not of pure German blood, like all the other members of the community, but was a native of a border province that was more than half French. The two nationalities had not fused in him, and his nature was the battle-ground of warring ancestral traits. There were moments when he was content, good-natured, and phlegmatic — at which times he

acknowledged the Teuton strain in him; but they were rare, and his lively Gallic contempt for everything German quickly wiped them out of the memory. When Napoleon was in exile, and the army of France no more, he had come to America, and, finding no better employment, had wandered with fiddle and fife, playing and piping for bread.

He came, one night, to Harmonie, where the good Rappites provided food and shelter for destitute wanderers, at their Ruhhaus. Daylight of the next morning found him shivering and burning with malarial fever. The brothers who nursed him through a tedious illness took great care for his soul, and preached to him of the sinfulness of his worldly life, the Second Coming of Christ, and the necessity for preparing for His advent by holy living. Hanno was touched by their kindness, and really wished, for the moment, to become a better man. Also the Harmonists had every comfort and many pleasures. From mixed motives (it is given to few and rare souls to have wholly disinterested ones in this world), he renounced the world and the flesh, and him who rules mankind by them, and became Brother Hanno, the Rappite.

The devil seems never to have been sensitive to renunciation and did not desert an old friend for so small a matter. The life at Harmonie entailed much labor, and there were prohibitions and numerous religious services. The restless heart of the old soldier

found both labor and worship irksome, and was prompted to many a revolt against the rules of the community and many an offense to its moral sentiment.

Upon this particular morning, the vital currents set in motion by his energetic rebellion could not subside again to the slow measures of sleep. He grew restless, and began to ache for exercise. So he climbed cautiously out of his bedroom window, and slipped from the roof of the porch to the ground in a little plantation of plum trees. There was but one place at Harmonie to which every member of the community was not free to go at will — the still-house. Naturally it attracted Hanno in this mood of revolt.

The path led by a low meadow where the lush red clover had been leveled by the wind of last night's storm. As he approached it, he heard a human voice crying in distress, and found, huddled in the long grass at the foot of the high stone wall of the pleasure garden, Brother Laurence, the schoolmaster. He was white and dazed, and his wet and disheveled clothing seemed to testify that he had lain there all night exposed to the fury of the storm.

Having assisted the injured man from the marshy spot where he lay to a little rise of drier ground, Hanno hurried back to the village, and burst excitedly upon a group of brothers who were clearing away the debris of a fallen tree.

"Brother Laurence lies in the meadow sorely hurt!" he cried, not unmindful of the importance that any bit of news gives its bearer in such a community. "If you ask, I think it is his thigh that is broken, though he acts like one in a dream; it may be from some blow upon his head — which was never thick enough for a German! Come, that we may help him."

Being very curious, they lingered to ask questions, and one referred wistfully to the fact that breakfast was already much behind time, which roused Hanno's ire.

"But the brother is hurt!" he cried. "Had I been like you, who think only of eating, he might have perished! But God sends the man with the moment, and I was there. Oh, Time is not tied to a post like a horse! You are like donkeys who bray at the fire when they should be hauling water!"

"Softly, softly, Brother!" soothed one of the older men, as they all fell into line behind old Hanno and took their way to the meadow.

Father Rapp had risen earlier than usual that morning, being anxious to see what damage had been wrought by the storm which had broken at midnight and raged with amazing violence until daybreak. At every step he met some evidence of loss and ruin. The love of flowers was a passion with him, and Harmonie, which had bloomed like a vast garden, lay devastated now, the leafy crowns of fruit trees and

prostrate and mangled plants impeding his progress. The brothers were patiently clearing away the remains of all this beauty that they had produced with labor as patient; and the sisters were bustling cheerily about the great kitchens of the rooming-houses, browning corn-pone, frying bacon and ham, setting the tables with dainty care, and beautifying each with flowers from the dooryards.

The pleasure garden began at the valley's edge, and climbed gently to a summit crowned with imposing trees, among which was set the little Temple of Harmonie. Threading the torn avenues with many a sigh for a ruined tree or shrub, and many a prayer of gratitude for a favorite preserved, George Rapp ascended to the little shrine, and found that the fury of the storm had centered around it. The converging paths were thickly strewn with broken branches; one great oak lay across the mignonette bed that surrounded the temple, another had fallen upon the little building, crushing it like an egg-shell. He climbed over the broken floor of the porch and peered into the violated fane. The trembling oak leaves and the rising moisture slightly obscured his vision, and it was some moments before his attention was held by something that reflected the sun's rays. It was a curling tress of long, gold-brown hair, wound around a leafy branch and shining a gruesome challenge to the eye. And he made out in the dimness a little head with more wandering, sun-reflecting tresses

— a woman's slight form, half-buried under the fallen timbers, and one white, upturned hand, as pretty and as futile as the broken lilies he had trod upon outside.

The brothers, whom Hanno had summoned to the help of Brother Laurence, were carrying him to the schoolmaster's house, when, at the intersection of the paths leading from the meadow and the pleasure garden, they met a procession of sisters carrying the body of Leah von Korassel from the ruined temple. Shocked and silenced, they drew back to give the dead precedence. The mounting sun struck lustily upon every surface that could answer with a gleam — upon the rain-washed vegetation, the rich tones of blue and brown homespun, the white apron which Sister Bena had spread over the face and bosom of the dead, and the long tresses of bright hair escaping from it. It shone, too, upon the small, white hand lying exposed on the side nearest Brother Laurence. When the silent sisters had passed, his bearers, turning, found him lying in a swoon, and, taking him up, went forward sadly toward the village.

Later in the day, George Rapp sat at the Great House awaiting Sister Bena, whom he had summoned to an interview.

He was not yet much past middle age, and was of exceptional vigor. Physically, there was nothing to justify the title of "Father" bestowed upon him by his disciples; but a certain ripeness of judgment,

benignancy of manner, and a broad and sympathetic tolerance of human weaknesses, gave him indisputable claim to it. He was a large man, with a broad and rugged head. His wide mouth had the flexible lips and the clean line of the magnetic personality. His eyes were sometimes blue, and sometimes gray, changing with the temper of his spirit. In serenity and hope they were gray and deep; in moments of discouragement they were blue, and slightly filmed. Humor lighted them, and anger gave them a red inner fire; yet they were kind eyes, and sent many a friendly message from under the beetling brows.

Next after the eyes, his hands were most indicative of his character. They were large, well-formed, soft-fleshed, with spread thumbs and strong, supple fingers. They could soothe with a feminine lightness of touch, they could restrain with tenderness or harshness; but they were most at ease in ingenious tasks — small manual operations requiring delicate and skilful handling. He carried his great figure well, but not gracefully, for his head was thrust forward, as if his energetic thoughts outran his steps.

The room in which he awaited Sister Bena was large and well-lighted, its ornaments being its fine proportions, and the exquisite marking of the wood chosen for its finishing. The furniture was simple, massive and well-kept, with no beauty save that of line and fitness. There were blossoming plants in the windows, and vases and bowls of cut flowers on

tables and shelves; and upon the wall opposite the entrance, glorifying the room, was Benjamin West's great picture, *Christ Healing the Sick*.

George Rapp sat beside a table, upon which his books and papers were ranged in order, and supported his head upon his hands in an attitude that suggested both weariness and care. He could see Sister Bena cross the street and come up the walk to his door. He watched her from the shadow of his supporting hand, and a look of indulgent interest stole over his face. She was small and slight, and looked like a child in her full, short skirt of peasant blue, showing her little feet and slender ankles clad in dove-colored hose, clocked with red, and neat, low shoes with silver buckles. She carried herself with a dainty pride and precision, and she had the look of one whose life has known little of the coarse, or the humiliating. With characteristic fastidiousness she dusted the latch of the gate lightly before she lifted it, and the action brought a smile to the sad face of Father Rapp; it was lingering in his eyes when he greeted her.

She, however, was pale and very grave. Her beautiful eyes were broadly ringed with shadow, and her face had the pathetic sweetness that comes from unselfish anxiety. She seated herself, and waited for him to speak. This masculine reticence of hers pleased him; it justified his habit of consulting her in many of the difficulties that beset the spiritual and

temporal head of a community. "Bena," he said sharply, "what am I to do next?"

"You mean about the burial of Sister Leah?"

"Drop the word 'sister'; as an apostate she has no claim upon it."

"As a woman she may claim a grave."

"Not here, not among our faithful and righteous dead! Do you not see that I am compelled to make an example of this first apostate? The shame of it will penetrate to the world outside; the poison will infect others of the community. She can not sleep among the pure. I have determined upon sending the body to Pittsburg. I have arranged, also, for a service in which I shall proclaim her sin to the community and warn them against it. Has not God dealt with her suddenly and harshly? What am I, to condone a sin which He has chastised with the lightnings of instant wrath?"

"You are a man, George. Do not do this thing. Think how it was with her. She made the sacrifice of her husband and her child in all sincerity. She has been true to her profession until now. In some moment of sudden temptation she yielded to the feelings that have lain always at the bottom of her heart, and they swept everything out of their way. She forgot her vows, she thought only of how she loved her husband, how it was worth apostasy, shame, the fires of hell, perhaps, to call him her own again! I feel sure that they have never met before, in the pleas-

ure garden, nor anywhere, in secret. It was for the first time, and, as you say, God found and punished her; leave her to Him."

"But I dare not — the evil may spread." George Rapp was pacing the floor with quick, impatient strides. He seldom brooked opposition, but in this case there was the irritation of conscious weakness added to his struggle with this sweet-voiced, persistent woman.

"What of Brother Laurence?"

"She tempted him. He has told me all. She drew him to the garden, by pleading and threats. He went, thinking to reclaim her to her allegiance, but her woman's blandishments were too strong for him. He yielded; and yet not wholly. The awfulness of his sin came to him at length, and he strove, even then, to withstand her. But she would have no mercy, his weakness gave her a claim upon him, and, helpless before her, he was on the point of consenting to leave the community and go with her into the world, when, with a last effort of righteousness, he cast her from him and fled. Then came the vengeance of God upon her, and she was slain in the storm."

"Or His pity, George. Let the earth of our own graveyard hide her poor little body — let her shame be unspoken."

"Bena, you are wilfully blind to my point of view. This feeling, this carnal passion that led them into

sin, is cunning and persistent; it is the secret, deadly foe of our sect and our community. How can I condone the first open breaking of vows and the law? How can you condone it?"

He stopped beside her chair and looked down into her face, with a piercing and reproachful gaze. She paled and trembled, then suddenly drew her little figure upright and looked at him with courage.

"I know what it means to love where there is no return," she said in the clear tone of a challenge. He stood, arrested by her words, in a strange silence and shocked helplessness. She went on, more quietly:

"I, Bena Veneno, who have had no husband and no child, can understand the heart of the erring woman. Love made her a Rappite; it came before belief, and was stronger. There is another in this community whose fidelity to it is more than half faith to the man whom, all her life, she has loved. She was once a little girl who visited a weaving-room in old Würtemberg, to watch her cousin at his loom. She came daily, delighting to be near him, to see him, to hear his voice. He married another. What was she to do? She hid her pain, and bore her life. Years after, when they both were old, she adopted his religion, and she threw in her lot with his. Was it more from belief than another feeling? The Regeneration of Man, the Second Coming of Christ, are great things, but it might seem a greater to a woman to spend her last days near one whom she has always

loved, with no sweeter heaven in store than the chance to soothe him in sickness, or to be near him in death."

Her voice wavered and died away. She sat quite still, but her little figure seemed to be quivering with the reviving energies of her youthful passion. George Rapp had turned and was also silent. After a long pause, he spoke, without looking toward her.

"It shall be as you say, Bena." There was a quavering sweetness in his voice, and the hands, clasped behind him, gripped together with fierce tension.

"And, George —" Bena had recovered her usual brisk sweetness of address. "George, I want a special claim upon the child — Leah's baby. He made such a brave stand for his rights — he is so little, and so sweet! They say he pines and wastes away. Let me take him and give him the love and fondling for which he is dying. I will give him up when he is older, but now — Oh, let me know what it is to have a child to love!" Her voice broke again in the stress of feeling, and Father Rapp, quivering under it, whispered an assent. When she had arisen to leave him, he turned to her; his eyes were like a blue flame, but his face was calm.

"Bena," he said, "I did not know, long ago — in Würtemberg."

The villagers were engaged in the wonted industries of Harmonie, with the exception of the carpenter brothers, who were fashioning a coffin, the grave-

diggers, who were making an ominous wound in the smooth turf of the Rappite burying-ground, and the sisters, who were gathered in an upper chamber of the Gasthaus to sew the burial robe of Leah von Korassel. They were Lanie, Martha, Drusia and Margreta, and they worked under the direction of Sister Tamar.

The room in which they sat was large, and the sun shone into it through intricate vine shadows. The perfume of flowers came up from the Gasthaus yard, and the twitter of many birds, friendly and unafraid, came with it. Now and then the sound of the blacksmith's hammer knicked the silence. Now and then the voices of brothers and sisters passing from the fields to the village came floating up to them.

Tamar was a woman of ability. It was she who took charge in domestic crises at Harmonie, and brought all things to the end of decency and order. Upon this occasion she measured the linen, and assigned to each seamstress her part in the fashioning of the shroud.

"Were it not more fitting to choose a less fine linen, and to cut it scantly?" said Sister Martha, sighing, and charging her voice with grief and reproach. "Should not she go humbly into her grave, think you?"

Tamar flushed and clicked her scissors sharply before replying.

"I chose the finest web in the store-house. I shall cut it amply, and I bid you to finish it with your best skill. She went not humbly in life, and I can not shame her, now she is dead."

"What was she doing in the pleasure garden, at night, and alone?" Martha asked with a little flush of triumph.

"God was in the pleasure garden, and doubtless many good spirits, Sister," Drusia suggested timidly.

"There be evil spirits, and they walk also," Martha replied grimly. "Evil was abroad, else Brother Laurence had not suffered that fall."

Tamar bent over the linen she was cutting and held her peace. Presently Margreta said musingly:

"Brother Laurence was ever strange! What feels he now, I wonder, since God has taken his beautiful wife away? Does he grieve?"

Lanie looked at her with contempt. Margreta had not married, and was sometimes made to feel herself shut off from natural sources of knowledge and authority among sister women.

"You know nothing of men, nor of the feeling between husband and wife. You think it something that clings to one always, like a lisp, or a limp."

Margreta bent over the band she was stitching with exquisite daintiness and precision. She had no words for answering, but an ally appeared in little Sister Drusia, who, trembling like a frightened bird, said pleadingly:

"Sister, I would that you spoke less lightly of a mighty thing. Love is not to be likened to a lisp or a limp."

Lanie worked in silence; when she spoke again it was with no show of feeling.

"We shall not make many burial gowns, Sisters. The Coming of Christ is very near, and few will pass away before He appears in the heavens."

"Are you so sure?" asked Tamar, arresting her needle in mid air, while she awaited the reply.

"It is promised. Surely you know that the signs are fulfilling, and it can not be long, now? As for me, I feel that I have folded away my Advent garments for the last time. When I take them out again it will be for the journey to the Land of Canaan, in the company of the elect."

Lanie's little face beamed with joyous faith; Tamar looked mournfully at her.

"Ah, Sister! You believe. But if there are voices that question, 'Why is His coming delayed?' There were some among us, from the first, who expected not to die before He came, but who lie now in the burying-ground."

Martha looked reproachfully at Tamar.

"If you have doubts, why spread them? Have those who were summoned gone so far? Do you never feel their presence? Last night I heard Sister Catherine's crutch in the hall of Number Three — 'knock, knock!' it went, as if in life."

"I grieve to hear that," said Drusia softly. "Sister Catherine rebelled at her cross; I would she might not be lame in Heaven!"

"Father Rapp, at least, is not to die — there will be no burial garment for him." Margreta sighed wistfully. Tamar shook her head.

"There has been no revelation that he is not to die. It is our love that has put the thought into our minds. We know that it is appointed him to present us all to Christ, when He appears, but what if it is long yet? Longer than the time allotted us? The hour which was fixed upon in old Würtemberg struck and He came not. There was likewise that day since we are at Harmonie, when we made ready for Him; it went like another, and He came not. The time is not yet; suppose it were not for a hundred years? What are a hundred years to God?"

Lanie sprang up, letting spool and shears fall to the floor with unheeded clatter. She wound her arms about Tamar and rocked back and forth in her excitement, crying:

"Oh, Sisters, the evil is spreading! Some have whispered that Sister Leah had lost faith, and the devil drew her to the Temple in the night and the storm. Perhaps he was seeking Brother Laurence's soul also, and it was his good angel that pushed him from the wall of the garden and made him helpless to follow, or he, too, might have felt the wrath of God. Let us pray for Sister Tamar, that these

doubts depart and leave her free to understand the truth."

Tamar gently loosened the clinging arms, folded the finished shroud, and, laying it aside, said humbly:

"I go to confess my fault to Father Rapp, Sisters. Forgive me."

There were other incidents, not unlike this in the Gasthaus chamber, to show how strongly the fate of the apostate had stirred the hearts of the communists. The brothers in the workshops, and the far greater number in the fields, had also their conjectures, their wonder and their melancholy interest in the mysterious tragedy. Leah von Korassel had herself been a mystery to them; her youth, her beauty, her pride, had set her apart from the others. Her early rebellion, and her conversion to such fervid and active spirituality were startling and unaccountable to their phlegmatic natures. They were not all quite able to grasp the theory, put forth by some of the more imaginative and worldly-wise, that her death was the consequence of infidelity to her vow, but they divined something evil and hidden in it, and felt the disturbance of their pure and placid life.

But they were a simple people, and trustful; they said: "The good God knows," and they left the rest to Father Rapp. He had no difficulty in securing that silence, as to the mystery of Leah von Korassel's death and the strange coincidence of the

accident to Brother Laurence, which he demanded. Nor was there any question of Sister Bena's right to take their child out of the nursery and cherish its fading life. All small and selfish things were swept out of their hearts by the death of the mother, and the child was, henceforth, a being set apart for especial tenderness, and finally as the object of especial hopes and care. As the years passed, the tragedy and the mystery faded out of their minds, and Hugh grew to manhood without ever hearing of either. In a community where all natural ties were ignored, this was no miracle, and he was not the only child at Harmonie who lived in constant communication with a parent and knew nothing more of the relation than the dim stirrings of instinct or heredity.

## CHAPTER IV

### GIRLS AND A GIRL

> Her 'havior had the morning's fresh clear grace,
> The spirit of the woods was in her face.
> MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Hugh Veneno, who, as the adopted son of Sister Bena, had taken her name, was a healthy, bright-eyed, light-hearted lad, when the Rappites removed from Pennsylvania to that part of the Northwest Territory that soon became Indiana. He throve under Sister Bena's care and took the long journey and the novel pioneer conditions with a boy's eager zest.

Purchasing a large tract of both wild and cultivated lands in the Wabash Valley, the Rappites built a new village of Harmonie. With their industry and resources, it required but a few years to supplant the log cabins with substantial buildings, many of them of brick, of imposing size and quaint and agreeable architecture. They were set upon broad, well-kept streets, whose pavements were shaded by native trees — black locusts, sycamores, maples, and here and there a stately tulip, graceful elm, purple-fruited mulberry, or a wide-spreading, rough-barked, iron-wooded hackberry, beloved of birds and country children.

Hugh's boon companions were Great Peter, whose parents had died in the first year of the community, and Otho, the grandson of George Rapp.

The marriage of Gertrude Wiegand and John Rapp had taken place in Würtemberg. The wife, young, docile and devoted, had adopted her husband's beliefs, and had followed him to Harmonie without question. The laws of the community had not visibly chafed her soul, even when she was required to give up her child to the common care. But they had tortured her husband and stirred him to rebellion. He refused to take the vow of celibacy, and he fiercely resisted the separation from his wife and child. Death put an end to his struggle, striking him down, by an accident, in the flower of his manhood. He protested with his last breath against the authority of his father to destroy his domestic life, and he died without forgiving him. Gertrude Rapp bore her bereavement silently. For a time she drooped, and seemed to be slipping out of life, but the influence of Leah von Korassel led her, also, to seek comfort in the religious life, and, developing an unsuspected eloquence and magnetism, she became an evangelist, preaching the gospel of the Second Advent in a large portion of neighboring country.

Otho, her son, was a steady-souled, gentle-minded lad. Having some knowledge of his parentage, he held himself aloof from intrusions upon his mother

and grandfather, with a quiet pride. He was large and strong, and had a pleasant freshness and sparkle about him. His coloring was the wholesome mixture of blond and tan; the sun was reflected from the small, close ripples of his yellow hair, which hung in bright curls about his neck and brow. The light glanced from the round of his firm cheek, and the blue of sunny waters was in his eyes. There was the same effect of light and life in his speech and manner, albeit he was a quiet fellow who awaited occasions placidly.

Great Peter was his counterpart in size, in figure, and disposition, in all things but the light. He echoed Otho's thoughts, imitated his manner, had the same cast of features, and the blond coloring, but there was a pathetic difference, which left him a dull and plodding fellow who never seemed complete without his friend to throw light into his personality.

Hugh and his companions, though they had a share in the labors of Harmonie, had many free hours to devote to the delightful vagrancy of boyhood, which the conditions of a new country made an absolutely perfect joy. They haunted the hollow under the bluff, in front of the sheep-cave, and, though they might have gone there openly, they chose devious and hidden ways, and added the spice of danger and secrecy.

One day Hugh arrived at this rendezvous from the bluff and the waterfall. Otho came around by the riv-

er, and up the stream which the waterfall fed. Peter was compelled to risk the more open and conspicuous course, through the corn-field to the lane between the mulberry and almond orchards. They greeted one another with the gibberish of a secret language, and each produced from his pockets a handful of little white sticks. Hugh brought from a hiding-place in the cave a bunch of tow, some pine shavings, and a flint, and proceeded to build a tiny fire in a sheltered spot among the roots of a water beech. Then the three boys stretched themselves upon the turf for the enjoyment of a forbidden pleasure — the smoking of "punk sticks."

"Punk sticks" absorb the sun and the dews, until they reach a certain juicy roundness, about the thickness of one's little finger; this while they are gay green twigs upon a prosperous tree. Then, riven from the source of the sweet juices of life, they die, shriveling slowly, cell by cell, as plant things must. Then the water takes them, macerates, builds again, and finally casts them ashore, pale as chalk. Then comes another patient process — a long drying in the sun—so faithfully does Nature slave to make the proper "smoke" for vagrant boys. But she achieves perfection in the "punk stick."

The blue smoke-wreaths forming above a pair of dreamy eyes, as the boy lay on his back and watched it grow, represented the exquisite mingling of a dozen subtleties — the unfolding of mature instincts, the

promise of life, the sense of power, and floating waves of joy, that come to youth out of the infinite. Only a boy, hiding among trees, in the spring, could taste discriminatingly all their deliciousness.

And this was practically spring, though the calendar still marked February. But it had been one of those mild, uncertain winters of southern Indiana, when, day after day, whether the sun shines or the rain falls, the temperature remains above the freezing point; when men complain of unseasonable weather, expect and cherish all kinds of illnesses on account of it, and miss the good the gods send them.

The plants, being wiser, accept the pleasant warmth and moisture, and burgeon and grow. And, though it is sometimes to find all their tender produce incased in ice, or heaped with snow, it is also, sometimes, to enjoy the novelty of winter bloom and beauty. In such seasons the tops of blue-gum trees are pink with swelling buds, the blackberry and wild rose keep their foliage, the cinquefoil carpets the open woods with green, and the wild morning-glory seeds germinate. In old-fashioned gardens the japonica blooms at Christmas, and jocund old apple trees bedeck themselves with a tuft of blossoms.

It was warm in the hollow of the sheep-cave, and a gay and friendly spirit pervaded it, the wild life going on there with a pleasant little stir, unchecked by the presence of the smokers. The jays and squirrels feasted upon the beechnuts openly,

even with impudence, keeping on the limbs near the boys, and chattering with the same mischievous boldness. Black and white sapsuckers and brown nuthatches ran noisily up and down the tree boles, and red-headed woodpeckers hammered incessantly upon decayed trunks. A winter wren sang ecstatically in a redbud tree, and a boisterous congress of blackbirds was discussing forage in the clump of viburnums and young ash trees at the edge of the branch. To all this the smokers gave perfunctory but sympathetic interest.

When the edge had worn off his first delight in the smoking, Great Peter detached his stick from his lips to say:

"I am afraid Yetta saw me coming here. She was spreading linen to bleach upon the slope under the big black mulberry tree."

Hugh looked at him sharply.

"You should not have let her see you!"

"I dropped behind the hedge. But I heard her giggle — I'm sure I did."

Nobody answering, Peter resumed his smoking. Hugh continued to look at him with a little frown of displeasure, which Peter was determined not to notice. Being several years the elder, he did not always submit gracefully to the domination which Hugh was prone to attempt. Otho, however, took it with a lazy humor, perhaps because he was conscious of force enough to withstand it, if he chose.

Hugh, a handsome, well-formed lad, was of a slighter and finer build than either of his companions. He had a look of fire and alertness that marked him of another race, with fresh currents in its veins, and a new outlook upon life. There was also, in gesture and tone, some hint of the fact that he was the pride and delight of the whole community. But he had an open-hearted warmth of manner, was noisy, mischievous, and vagrant-souled, after the manner of normal boyhood, and easily kept the affections of the lads whom he essayed to rule.

Each of the three was in his way a notable youth, and there was a bond of affinity between them so strong that all their thoughts seemed to follow the same course when Hugh, having reached the end of unshared meditations upon the subject, remarked:

"It is funny about girls — how easy they are to giggle."

"They are funny every way," was Otho's conclusion.

"Yes, that is true," Peter corroborated.

There was another pause. The smoke-wreaths formed and floated away, their spicy odor drowning the wood scents, and, probably, stimulating loquacity, for the taciturn Peter spoke again:

"There are many puzzling things about girls. I often have wondered why the good God made them — and women."

"You had to have a mother, didn't you? And don't everybody?" asked Hugh, with the air of having settled the question to the satisfaction of all reasonable investigators.

"Why did I have to?" Peter looked him full in the eye — at which Hugh's confidence shriveled — and, shaking his head, continued:

"Couldn't there have been another way? The world would be simple if there were only men and animals in it. Women tangle things up; they draw a man's thoughts; I — I —" His ideas seemed to ooze in ill-chosen words, and he paused, hesitating.

"Best not think of them, Brother," said Hugh sententiously.

Otho, looking over at his brother giant with sympathy, said:

"Peter can not help it. You are but a boy; Peter is fast becoming a man."

Hugh did not like to be silenced, and he was ready with a flippant answer, when suddenly he looked at Peter. His gaze concentrated, wavered, and fell. Some unnoticed change in his comrade, some hinted mystery abashed him, and from that moment he was interested.

They seriously, though somewhat desultorily, pursued the subject of woman and her place in the universe.

"They say that God made her to keep Adam from loneliness, and she led him into sin," said Peter.

"But He made her, too. Why did He make her so? Adam was weak; he should have resisted her tempting," said Otho.

"Why, don't you know?" Hugh cried eagerly. "Adam loved Eve, and he could not help doing as she wished."

Otho and Peter ruminated upon his words, their round boyish faces elongating with the gravity of their thoughts. Finally, Otho raised his head and shook all his yellow curls excitedly.

"That is it — that is what one does not understand, *das Lieben.*"

"No," said Peter, taking his smoke-wood from between his lips, "one does not understand that, Brother. It is a mighty thing and — and a strange!"

"One wonders how it might feel — this loving."

Otho pondered, with a questioning look at Peter, who shook his head and avoided it. How is one to tell, even to one's nearest friend, the thoughts that come when there is no knowledge? Hugh, perhaps because he was younger and had felt no stirrings of this mysterious force, was more willing to hazard conjectures.

"I do not believe it comes. It is there already, and when the right one comes — it just leaps up! What can you do then?

"There is a story of a knight who took a lady across the sea to marry his uncle, the King of Cornwall. She took with her a love-potion that a witch

had mixed. It was to make her husband love her. By mischance it was put into the wine while they were crossing the sea, and the lady and the knight drank of it together — unknowing. What could they do? Nothing. Wherever the knight went, the lady's love followed him; and though she tried to be a good wife to the king, the knight's love kept calling to hers. It was like that with them, always, until they died!"

Hugh's voice grew unconsciously pathetic; his listeners sighed, and Otho's handsome face was wistful; one might surmise that not all his thoughts of love were thoughts of fear. Yet, what he said was that a man should watch well and keep this cunning thing out of his heart.

"For when once it is there —" he said; and, words failing, he shrugged his great shoulders to complete the expression of his warning.

They lighted fresh punk-sticks and smoked silently for a while. Presently, and cautiously, for these were wards of a celibate community where love in this sense was a tabooed subject, only to be ventured upon, like smoking, at those times when the sprouting wings of manhood must unfold for a moment in the breeze of insubordination. Otho went on:

"But men have had it and conquered it. Many of the Rappites gave it up wholly, and seem not unhappy."

Otho always spoke slowly; now, he lingered be-

tween the words, turning over his crowding thoughts and choosing to which he should give expression. Hugh interrupted him impatiently.

"I've seen things. Only yesterday Brother Christopher left a rose upon Sister Drusia's window-sill. It was meant for her; I saw her take it. He saw her, too — he was waiting; then he turned away smiling — until he saw me. I was sorry that he saw me, and I tried to look as if I had seen nothing."

Otho took up the story:

"He was her husband when they came to this country. It is said that neither the husband nor the wife has been able to give up the marriage completely, as others have done, and Father Rapp has often to reprove them because they can not crush that feeling. You remember Brother Vitus, who went away to the West with Sister Barbara, and who lives now on the southernmost farm? He was sent there because, when he came back after she was dead and begged the brothers to receive him again, he would not say he was sorry he had broken the law, but held out stoutly that he had done no wrong in returning to the wife whose love drew him. It must be that it takes fiercer hold upon some hearts."

"Brother," urged Peter, "it is as you have said; a man should watch lest it get hold upon him."

"It is as God pleases," Otho answered.

At that moment Hugh began to shout: "Look, look yonder at that old wild gobbler!"

He pointed to a great sycamore tree, long dead and ghastly as a leper, which towered above the willows fringing the river bank. An enormous wild turkey had alighted in it and begun to gobble. They kept an old flintlock gun in the sheep-cave. Hugh brought it, and they started through water and underbrush, across fields and fences, to the river woods.

But the great bird had no mind to await them there, for as soon as they were within musket-range he lifted his wings and flew across the slough to Major Daventry's island.

"The old men say that a wild turkey can smell powder," said Otho, as they stood looking regretfully after him. "They know the woods and the lay of the land better than people, and they know a man's tracks from any beast's. There! Hear him gobble! It is late in the day for that, don't you think, Brothers? If we could cross the slough, we would have him."

"Let us cross," said Hugh. "There's no harm. We ought to get that old fellow. There's a dugout under the willows; come!"

The temptation was too strong for the Rappite boys, so they climbed into the dugout and pulled across to the island. It was a charming one, some three thousand acres in extent, rising from a white sandy beach to a plateau crowded with the noblest of forest trees. It was separated from the mainland by the slough, which was deep enough for a part of

the year to shut it off in a charming seclusion, and shallow enough at low water to admit of fording. It belonged to Major Walter Daventry, whose new stone house stood partly revealed among the trees on its summit. This gentleman owned, also, a small shore farm, which bit into the river fields of the Rappites, and relieved the island dwellers of the inconvenience of their water-bound situation.

The turkey had taken refuge in the woods on the Illinois side of the island, but he did not linger longer than to give his pursuers sight of the majestic way in which he was able to cross the broader flood of the Wabash and elude them. The three boys saw the last of him with regret; but it was a novel pleasure, this forbidden one of a visit to the island, and they found compensations. However, the gobbler was much in their thoughts, and they finally hit upon the construction of a pen-trap, in case he should come back that way. The rich woods of that side of the island furnished abundant material for it, and it was soon made. They built it of dead branches, and roofed it with living ones, and scattered inside it a handful of parched corn from Hugh's pocket. The sudden onslaught of a young dog and the encouraging cries of "Sic him, Ranger! Sic! Sic!" in a fresh, childish voice startled them from the finishing touches.

Ranger dashed forward with every intention of obeying his mistress, but caught sight of Hugh — a boy! the very playmate for which he had instinctively

longed in all his puppyhood! And this boy had just the engaging snap of the fingers and the good-natured voice that no normal dog could resist. The growl became a bark which urged his mistress to reconsider her attitude.

She was a vigorous and well-grown child of twelve or thirteen, having just entered upon that stage of development when something fine and strange begins to unfold from the simplicity of childhood. As if conscious of it, she carried herself with an air in which shyness and dignity were charmingly mingled.

Her expression was spirited rather than sweet, and she lifted her chin and curled her lip with that precocious assumption of authority which marks the child ungoverned and over-indulged. From the small head, shading and softening the clear-cut face, a marvelous flood of rich brown curls fell to her waist. They reflected the light, moved with every motion of the active body, and yet, in their long lines, gave a still dignity, almost a rigidity to the carriage. Their effect appealed to Hugh's indifferent eye and, in the flux of unformed impressions, fixed for ever, like a landmark, the fact that flowing curls are the most charming and feminine of feminine charms.

This was, however, a thing of the future; at present the dog fawned his legs and would not heed his mistress' peremptory cries of, "Come here, sir!" further than to look at her and wag the tidings that he had found a good thing.

She was righteously indignant. Selecting Otho as the elder of the party, she addressed him boldly:

"My dog is only a puppy, sir. If he were older, he would mind me, and you would not dare intrude on my father's lands — setting traps!"

Hugh flushed and ignored Ranger's advances. Otho's round cheeks burned with shame; he had no words in such a crisis, but stood shrinking before her. Peter, thinking himself not seen as yet, slipped behind the nearest tree to hide his great bulk from her. She looked from one to the other, with softening eyes. The child in her would have liked to rout the poachers triumphantly; but something new in her was better pleased to see this confusion, more humble than obedience. Even to a little girl the first taste of feminine power is as the apple from the tree of knowledge, and many things hitherto undreamed-of are cleared to her. This child had a sudden sense of a fine and high ideal inside these boyish heads, and felt that it was only by harmonizing her conduct with it that she might shine in their eyes.

These half-formed thoughts flew through her mind while she looked from Otho to Hugh, her features unconsciously molded to the ideal standard she was reading in their minds. And then, all dignity forgotten, she broke into a laugh of childish mischief at Peter behind the walnut tree, which did not quite conceal him.

"Why does that boy hide?" she asked teasingly. "Is he afraid of Ranger?"

Peter shrank closer to the bark. Oh, if it would but open and inclose him!

Otho could not let her laugh at Peter and feel that he was a faithful friend, though Hugh laughed with her, which was monstrous. So he spoke, painfully but bravely:

"It is wrong of us to build traps upon your father's island. We will leave you this one and return to Harmonie."

The girl investigated it with the toe of her shoe.

"It seems a good trap. Why is it wrong for you to come to the island?"

The daring unreason of the question struck them dumb. She followed it with a smile of such sweetness and such aloofness as made the three boys shrink and blush again. They were at the same instant charmed and crushed, but they despaired of following her subtleties when she added:

"There is no reason why you should not come to the island, if you choose. I am sure you are very welcome. Come, Ranger. You have not been a nice doggie."

She seemed to ask Otho's opinion upon it. He answered heartily:

"No. He should have minded you."

"He knows enough to mind," said Hugh, with astonishing ease. "A dog with such a fine head always has sense. You could teach him tricks."

"Oh, could I?" cried the girl, all her fine-lady

ways forgotten in an instant. "Oh, I would love to see you teach him tricks!"

She seated herself on a log, crossed her feet, folded her hands, and waited patiently for Ranger's lessons to begin. The puppy justified his broad head, and Otho was even better at teaching than Hugh. Peter, who had the gift of understanding animals, watched them from behind his tree, and, before he knew it, was whispering suggestions. Hugh took them with some impatience. Who would care to be instructed from behind a tree in an art in which he had made a claim to superiority?

"Oh, come along out here, if you know so much!" he said at last.

Peter came, an inch at a time, feeling that each inch revealed, taken from the ground up, some hundred pounds or so of bashful boy. But the girl was merciful, and refrained from seeing the slow revelation, and did not look at him until some time after the whole thing was accomplished.

Hugh, crowded out of his place of instructor by Peter's greater gift, wandered into the woods with his gun, and came back presently with a wild duck that he had shot as it was rising from the reeds. He held up his game, glowing with pride, feeling that a girl should realize the superiority of the other sex. This girl, while Peter and Otho weighed the duck in their hands, and were full of generous praise for his true eye and steady aim, looked into the woods

with an abstracted gaze, as if feats of arms were nothing. Hugh came nearer, the praise of others having emboldened him, and held up the bird with a challenge. Her eyes turned slowly to the limp body, the nerveless head, the wing inertly unfolding, and grew wide with grief.

"Oh, the lovely thing!" she sighed, and looked down.

Hugh saw tears shining, and turned the murdered creature to the light. Somehow its aspect had changed; he never saw, in all his life, another thing that seemed so to express the wantonness of man as did that drooping head. He laid the bird down on the leaves, Otho and Peter standing silent and sad as he, though it was not they who had done the deed. The girl wiped her tears.

"Well," she said quietly, "I suppose you will make a fire now and cook it. I won't dress it, but I know what I will do. I will go to the house for bread and salt. Have a nice bed of coals when I come back. I guess the littlest boy would better go with me. Maybe I will bring a pie, and it will all be too much for me to carry."

Hugh forgave the "littlest boy" for the charming way in which she managed their expedition, slipping from tree to tree, and smuggling out the supplies, as if it were a forbidden and dangerous one.

When they returned to the woods the fire was ex-

actly right, and the five of them — counting Ranger — made a feast fit for kings — and a queen.

It was the first of many they were to enjoy together, sometimes on the island, sometimes on the mainland. They learned that this new comrade, Trillis Daventry, could fish, could roam the woods, or lie at ease in a sunny spot; and, though she abhorred a gun and always grieved over the dead game, she would follow the scent as eagerly as any of the boys. The party was often swelled by the addition of Brother Hanno, who was a natural vagabond of the woods, and of little Yetta Schindler, a Rappite girl of Trillis' own age.

George Rapp held that "those who mean to do well need no watching; those who go toward evil will not be held back by it"; hence he made no effort to restrain social intercourse at Harmonie. Men and women lived in the same rooming-houses, worked side by side in field and shop, and took their pleasures together without restraint; therefore the association of this little group of Rappite children with the daughter of Major Daventry was accepted as natural and innocent.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RAID

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

In the early days of Hanno Tauffé's membership in the Harmonist community he had suffered much from the unconquerable habit of swearing. Realizing that he could not too long offend the piety of his brethren in safety, he had composed some ingenious oaths that sounded more like abuse of their arch-enemy, Satan, than stereotyped profanity, and by his specious arguments had gained a certain patient leniency for his use of them. He prided himself upon this compromise with law and order, and secretly boasted that no man alive got more satisfaction and less sin out of swearing than himself.

When the voice of the dawn bell went booming over the village on the morning of the harvest festival, he awoke with one of these oaths in his mouth.

"Herr Cleft-foot! But the sun rises early to-day! One would think him as eager for the holiday as these

childish Rappites. 'Tis a fool's chase for a flea, anyway. They enjoy nothing but prayers and hymns. What do they gain by sowing with the one and reaping with the other? Old Daventry rides over his fields, swearing at his slaves like a true high-born, and reaps as heavy a crop as they."

He continued to ruminate discontentedly while arraying himself in his uniform of band-master. This was a gorgeous construction of broadcloth of the finest weave of the Harmonie looms, and it had no more brass buttons and no more gold lace upon it because there was no more space where a sane tailor could have been induced to sew them. Having been made some years previously, and not having Brother Hanno's tendency to expand with age — nor his excuse in bountiful fare and unexcelled liquors — the suit required time and patience in the ceremony of putting it on. The band-master had little of either this morning, owing to his habit of beginning a holiday over night. A midnight visit to the still-house, where he had drunk more rum than the temperate use of the community would have allowed him, and another to the Gasthaus pantry, where he had, with infinite trouble and secrecy, helped himself to an inordinate quantity of pickled pigs' feet and a rich compote of fruits preserved in brandy, which he might have had for the asking, had made him pessimistic.

"I think there was more than appeared when that backwoodsman, Silliman, overtook me yesterday in the

chaise on my way home from Vincennes. He asked more questions than Dame Gurst, who was born dumb and cured by a miracle at Nancy. I wonder if my tongue betrayed my wits? Brother Vitus brews a heady ale, and my throat was dry when I reached his farmstead. This would be the day for that gang of rascals to pillage us neatly. 'Tis like these thick-heads to go praying to the fields and leave the back door ajar for the devil. Ah well! I do not carry this pack; why should I grunt?"

The bell was clanging again with an admonition altogether too personal, and still the pale blue knee-breeches of a military closeness of cut would not meet around his waist any more than the dandyish coat would stretch itself across the shoulders and yield to the sleeves their proper length.

"*Mein Gott!* It is the devil I mean, sir. He only will help a man in a pinch of vanity. Troubles are like sheep; one comes and others follow in the wink of your eye. There goes another buckle! and there is nothing for it but to swear like a man!"

Upon which, oaths, wonderful for ingenuity of selection and amazing for variety, rolled from Hanno's lips with all the facility of his military experience in many countries.

"Those old oaths are good mouth-cleaners. I was as bitter as cider ripened in a brass pot, and now I could caper, had I not to humor my breeches. 'One heeds his steps who walks on eggs.'"

When he had sewed the buckles on again with the awkwardness of an unhandy man, he propped a small mirror against the wall and was surveying the tiny sections of his costume which it presented in response to ingenious posturing, when he was interrupted by the quick patter of bare feet upon the stair, and the noisy breathing of three excited and hurried boys. Hugh, Otho and Peter burst into the little room.

"Hasten, Band-master!" Otho cried reproachfully. "All the village waits at the church corner, and the band has tuned many times. It is late."

Hanno, piqued at the indignity of the summons, paid no attention, but continued to turn before the glass, leisurely studying his image with serious interest.

"Father Rapp bids you hasten, Brother," said Peter; at which Hanno untied his black stock and fastidiously measured the ends.

Hugh, with a better understanding of the band-master's point of view, began to pose before the mirror, admiring his own sturdy legs, and puffing out his chest and cheeks in imitation of Hanno.

"Stop that, you young scamp! When we are in the fields to-day you shall work with me, and I'll sweat the mischief out of you!"

"But I do not go to the fields!" and, with the band-master's own short-legged strut, Hugh paced the length of the little chamber before adding: "I am chosen to keep the store!"

Now this was an honor that every boy at Harmonie coveted. Otho looked wistfully at Hugh's face of pride, and said ingratiatingly:

"Is it so, Brother? You would like some one to help — Great Peter, now?"

And Peter said, with a little gasp of sacrifice:

"Otho is better at the trading; you will choose him, Brother?"

Hugh wished not to be unkind, but there are honors that bear halving no better than a pair of shears.

"It is merry in the wheat-fields on festival day, and there is need of but one man at the store," he answered diplomatically.

"Why keep me here with your chatter when the whole village waits? You know well that nothing is done at Harmonie without the band-master," urged Hanno, ready at last.

"You have right, Brother," sighed Peter, looking with honest admiration at the short figure stuffed into its gorgeous attire, his simple heart divided between envy of Hanno's appearance and Hugh's honor as keeper of the store. As a reward for his admiration Hanno walked beside him to the green behind the church.

"Hugh has the horns and not the tail of the bull, to-day, lad. He thinks it fine to be left in charge of the store, but what if our enemies choose this day when I am out of the village — and the others, also — to make the raid they have so long threatened?

Where will your brave storekeeper be then? 'Between rats in the cellar and ghosts in the garret, it is ill choosing where to hide,' they say."

Hugh tossed his head.

"I am no coward, Brother Hanno. That you know. As for the raiders, those are idle tales that you bring back from stolen night-bouts with Silliman and his kind in the willows at the Point. Oh, boys have eyes, Brother! and tongues, though they use them less than they should, from kindness."

"'No flies get into a shut mouth,'" said Hanno sententiously; but later, and with some nervousness he added:

"Spit not in the well; you may have to drink the water. Who tattles makes tattlers."

"I shall not do either, Brother," Hugh replied magnanimously; and Hanno, having come by this time to the edge of the crowd that was waiting to form the harvest procession, threw off anxiety and assumed his jaunty air, bowing to the sisters whenever he could catch a demure eye, and carrying himself haughtily past unadmiring brothers.

Hugh watched the forming of the procession from a seat upon Father Rapp's gate-post, but his interest was often abstracted by glorious anticipations that darted through his mind. Hanno's prediction of a raid had filled him with a normal boy's keen delight in adventure. This threat of their unfriendly neighbors had long been familiar to the Rappites, and

had led to the building of the great stone fort and granary, and the collection of guns and ammunition, and other preparations for defense.

The backwoodsmen of Illinois and Indiana were not, as a rule, bad neighbors; but in the case of the Rappites there were many elements of suspicion, superstition, envy, and greed, to complicate the feelings of the ignorant. Hunters and trappers, coming into the village to trade their peltries, saw there a people, not superior to themselves in gifts or education, living in comfort, and even in luxury, while they, with incessant toil and at the constant risk of life itself, were able to secure only the bare necessities and a precarious footing in the wilderness. The celibacy of the Rappites was beyond their comprehension, therefore impossible for them to believe. They thought it only a cloak for gross liberty of passion, and, interpreting with the same coarseness everything else in the beliefs and customs which they did not understand, it became to them a moral obligation to persecute these foreigners, whose bursting granaries and storehouses seemed legitimate objects of plunder.

While Father Rapp and the other inhabitants of the village prepared to leave it, with perfect confidence in its safety, Hugh, knowing there was some ground for Hanno's prediction, although he had probably made it idly, let his fancy fly through all the possibilities of the coming day, when he, as sole guardian of Harmonie, was to defend her from her enemies,

and prove, once and for ever, that he was a man, not a mere boy, as those in authority sometimes seemed to rate him.

While he dwelt upon these things, the harvest procession formed and moved into the river road which led to the wheat-fields. Father Rapp rode at the head on his beautiful horse, making no mean equestrian figure in spite of his flapping hat and long black silk coat. Behind him marched Brother Hanno at the head of the band of ruddy musicians, their cheeks swollen with melody, and their brass instruments gleaming in the sun.

The blue-smocked, white-hatted brothers, each with a sickle upon his arm, came next in a long imposing line; and, after them, the sisters in their picturesque old-world dress, carrying three-pronged wooden rakes upon their shoulders; and, lastly, the children of Harmonie, some of whom were orphans adopted by the community from the death-stricken cabins of the wilderness.

Sometimes a little ripple of laughter came from the end of the line, where youth made holiday in spite of the semi-religious nature of the festival, and there were gossipy old sisters who twittered together like sparrows as they marched, and one or two girlish faces that beamed with merriment, despite Sister Martha's admonitions to a more seemly conduct.

When they had passed out of sight, and the music came but faintly back to the village, Hugh went

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to the general store and took his place there, his sense of importance only a little damped by lack of some one to see him in it. However, there were sure to be many before nightfall, it being the mart of all that region. The first hour passed so slowly that Hugh in his impatience multiplied it many times. He arranged and rearranged the articles upon the shelves, sprinkled and swept again the immaculate floor, twice visited the well in the back yard to fill the water bucket afresh, and went out several times to consult the sun-dial on the end of the great brick building.

Upon one of these excursions he heard the soft thud of hoofs in the dust, and saw a little cloud of it arise from behind the trees at the turn of the road. With boyish hurry he ran back into the store, and assumed an air of mingled indifference and dignity behind the counter. The customer proved to be a long, lank, ague-tinted backwoodsman, Job Silliman by name, who had no enviable reputation with the Rappites. He did not deserve a better, yet he was a man who might have won it in other circumstances.

His history had been typical. A farmer's son in one of the older states, he had been impressed by the glowing tales of the fabulous riches of the West. His pretty sweetheart had encouraged him, married him, and migrated with him to the Northwest Territory. The canvas-covered wagon, drawn by a pair of horses, the household goods inside it, and the young cow led behind it, were all their worldly pos-

sessions. But they were rich in youth, health, and courage, and Lizzie's bright spirit turned the difficulties and privations of the journey into romantic experiences. When it was done, she helped to clear the land, build the cabin, and plant the fields. She learned to shoot bears, defend herself from Indians, and kill snakes; to weave, to brew, and to nurse sick neighbors. And every year she brought a child into their world of want and hardship, until now there were two little graves in the woods for those who could not stay, and six little creatures in the comfortless cabin that was no larger and no better, for all their work and self-denial.

But Lizzie was changed. Gaunt, sallow, shaken by ague, consumed by fevers, worn by toil, hardened and embittered by life's broken promises, she was little like the bright girl Job Silliman had courted. The change maddened him. He saw that hardship was destroying her; hardship that held him powerless, and had seized upon their children, also, and was racking them with pain and want. He could not conquer his circumstances, he could only suffer in them; but he could drug his feelings with whisky.

Whisky, which made it possible to conquer the miasmatic wilderness of the middle West, which was the panacea for agues, snake-bites, and poisons, which fortified men for explorations, Indian raids, struggles with wild beasts, and Herculean toil, and which supported them through the frequent ordeal of being

lost in the forest, and many strange accidents of flood and field, could also make them forget their hard conditions. It could supply courage, too, and instigate to foolishness and cruelty.

Job Silliman came often to Harmonie and bought drink when he had meant to buy food and clothing for his family. His remorse fed his hate of the Rappites. On this particular morning he slouched into the store, and his eye brightened when he found Hugh alone in charge of it.

"The whole gang's gone to the reapin' I guess, ain't it?" he asked, setting down his gun and lounging upon the counter.

"Yes," answered the young merchant with dignity. "What can I do for you this morning?"

"Ever keep sto' before? I never seen you here."

"I have never been left alone in charge before. I have helped, and I know where things are."

"Reckon you could find the powder now?"

"Why, yes. How much do you wish? It is in the loft."

"Well, you mought fetch down a pound or so."

The Rappites treated all men as if they were honest, and were always laughed at for their childlike trustfulness, and often cheated by the objects of it. But this particular storekeeper acted with unexpected wisdom; he tapped upon a door, and a little, white-capped sister fluttered through it and took his place. She was dainty, and looked so thoroughly sweet and

good that Silliman took off his cap, and straightened his lank figure out of respect for her.

When Hugh returned with the powder, his customer asked:

"Reckon I'd find anybody at the tannery, if I was to go there?"

"No, not to-day; but if you have any peltries to exchange, or an order for leather, I can trade with you."

"Well, no; I ain't pushed for it. I'd like to get into the mill, if I could, though."

"The mill is closed."

"I thought likely it mought be when I seen that long line of 'em goin' to the wheat-fields. I reckon they ain't nobody left much in the village, is they?"

Sister Drusia looked up from her knitting-work, and there was something that disquieted Silliman in the expression of her small, gentle face.

"There are but few of the brothers who did not go to the reaping. Nevertheless, Harmonie is well protected," she said.

"Why, what do you mean, ma'am? What on earth made you say that? Who's a-goin' to bother you, and who'd pertect you, if anybody was to?" he replied, with a mixture of shame and craftiness.

"God," she answered softly. He dropped his eyes, and stood restlessly tapping his bare foot upon the floor.

"You folks got any extra firearms?" he asked

presently. Hugh remembered that this was a point upon which the Rappites were wary, and answered accordingly.

"Oh, we always have enough, and more, too."

"I reckon you keep most of your whisky in the gran'ry. Don't 'pear like they's much round here now," Silliman continued.

"I can get more, if you wish," the boy answered obligingly.

"Well, never mind jest now. I reckon, if I wanted some of that there finest brandy, I'd have to wait till you fetched it from that quare ol' porcupiny temple o' yourn, wouldn't I, now?"

Sister Drusia answered this with a decision so foreign to her nature that she trembled and paled.

"Brother Hugh will sell you no drink at all to-day. He is but a youth, I am but a woman; we meddle not with things that are so strong for evil."

Silliman paid for the powder with the pelt of a beaver, and went away.

"I like not that man's way," Sister Drusia remarked. "It is the strangest thing, but I dreamed last night of a christening. That is a sign of misfortune, I know not of what kind; but it is strange that this should happen after one has dreamed of a christening!"

A little later the sound of hoofs called Hugh to the door to receive a far different visitor — Major Walter Daventry, from the island. The military

figure and fine lean face impressed the Rappite boy with a sense of both power and restraint. The horse he rode was young and mettlesome, and his horsemanship perfect. This, however, had little to do with Hugh's admiration, being himself a tamer of horses and having no conception of a manliness that did not include that accomplishment.

It was the dress and bearing, the air of being from the world and of importance in it that made his heart swell with approbation, and flushed a flock of ambitions. In his mind at that moment there was a little contempt for Father Rapp and his followers, a little bitterness because his lot had been cast among them, and the determination to conquer circumstances and be himself just such another gallant gentleman and man of the world as this one entering the store and greeting Sister Drusia with a bow, suggesting not only deference to her, but his own courtly experience.

Major Daventry set his gun down and leaned on the counter, as Job Silliman had done; but his figure fell into lines of grace; his very lounging seemed an accomplishment. He also spoke with a drawl and lifted his eyes lazily when he asked, much as the other had done:

"They have gone to the fields and left you to keep the sto', all alone? And there is no one at the mill or the tannery, and only two or three helpless old men at home in the village?"

Sister Drusia answered him: "It is as you say. And there has been with us a man whose face was not good — it is very strange."

Her voice shook a little with the excitement of speaking to a fine gentleman from the world, and a delicate red flushed into her soft old cheek.

"I take this to be Hugh," Major Daventry said, smiling warmly upon him. "You are the lad who goes roaming the country with my little daughter; Trillis, we call her, though she is really Elizabeth."

"Yes, I am Hugh," the boy answered between pride and embarrassment.

"You must stop it soon now, for I shall have to send her away to school. A young lady should have her accomplishments." The sigh with which the speech ended touched Sister Drusia with sympathy for the father's prevision of loneliness.

"The time will pass," she said gently. "But until she goes, you need not fear to trust her with Hugh, for he is a good boy. It is strange how everybody at Harmonie loves him."

"I beg yo' pardon, madam, but it is not strange to those who know you good Rappites. He is fortunate to have grown up among you. You are alone here to-day? I wonder if you can shoot as well as my Trillis says," he added, turning to Hugh. His tone was still full of drawling indifference, but Hugh began to suspect this visitor of a purpose in his indirections.

"I can hit things," he answered.

"I'll wagah a heap on it — with that eye! How many guns are in the sto'?" His tone had suddenly become brisk and serious.

"There are three in the loft."

When they had loaded the guns and made various preparations, at the suggestions of Major Daventry, it was hardly necessary for Hugh to ask:

"Are they going to make a raid upon us?"

"There is a crowd of fellows hiding in the willows on the river bank. I recognized none but that Silliman, who lives in the cabin on the edge of the swamp. I think they are going to make the raid they have threatened so long. This seems a good day for it, when the men are all away from the village. I saw them from the island, and so came around behind the town and they did not see me. You might ride my horse to the wheat-fields and bring George Rapp and his men. But hark! There is not time; they are coming! Take your place at that window, behind the barrel. Be calm, now. We will settle them by ourselves; you are all the help I want."

And Hugh felt himself, reinforced by the genial warrior and deadliest shot in the Wabash country, more than equal to an encounter with the dozen or more backwoodsmen and degenerate Indians whom they saw silently closing around the store.

When an Indian, who had glided like a snake through the grass to the rear door, doubled, sat up,

then straightened out with a convulsion and lay quiet, and a young scoundrel from the Illinois side of the river, who was boldly trying the shutter of a front window, fell into the bed of sweet-williams at the foot of it, the attacking party grew wary. Boys in those days knew the use of a gun, and it now seemed that the one in charge of the store had a support they had not counted upon. They drew back and consulted in a little thicket of plum trees. But a window commanded their retreat, and Hugh was posted to greet them when they should come out of it.

Through the small, dim panes he saw the familiar landscape, but the fields and gardens, the rosy brick walls, the white cottages, the lazy river, were all scintillating now with the glory of romance. He would have refused to exchange places with a king. But, while his heart beat high, and his young body glowed with the joy of adventure, his hand was steady and his eye wary.

As a result of the conference in the thicket, the raiders detailed four of their number to guard the store, with the guns and the defenders of Harmonie shut up in it, and the others went boldly through the village to the granary. Their course was indirect, since none had been there before, and the trees and great rooming-houses shut it from view. Presently they saw its brown and yellow bulk and red-tiled roof, and were making for it, when shouts and hurry-

ing feet drew them away in the direction of the church, where Job Silliman and the men whom they had left to guard the store were standing in an excited group, accusing one another of carelessness and cowardice.

"Old Daventry was with that boy. They got away from the sto', and they're in here," one explained. "We've run 'm all the way, and they dodged into the church cellar."

"Well, they're safe in there as long as you don't let 'm out," replied the optimistic leader. "Let Jim and Reddy git into the church and hold down the trap-door, and two others guard the outside. Come on, boys, it's gittin' late and we all are gittin' drier!"

The church doors were not locked, and the guards drew heavy benches upon the trap-door leading from the cellar, and sat down at their ease. Their prisoners could still be heard beneath them, and there was no other egress through the building. Neither they nor the men outside had ever heard of the underground passage from the church to the granary, which afterward gave a romantic charm to the tales of old New Harmony.

The main party of the raiders went on through the broad and shady streets, which were sprinkled with the shed blossoms of the locust and the catalpa, the delicate perfume of the first hanging about them like a cloud. There was no one to be seen, and no sound but the drone of bees and the piping of birds broke the quiet of the village drowsing in the summer heat.

When they came to the granary its frowning walls of sandstone, irregularly piled, its deep windows barred with a massive lattice of hand-wrought iron, the great oak door with Herculean braces,— all that made the effect of bulk and permanence, so unfamiliar in the buildings of a new country, abashed them. But the peaceful sunshine playing upon it and the flowers that blossomed in its shadow reassured them. They supplied themselves with huge beams for rams from an unfinished building, and advanced to place the powder, which Job Silliman had bought from Hugh, at the foot of the door. But, when the leader stooped with it, a loop-hole at the side shrieked at him, and a wicked little puff of powder-smoke hung round it like a threat.

Astonished to find the fort defended, the attacking party withdrew to the shelter of the wall for consultation. Hugh had led Major Daventry through the secret tunnel from the church, and they had arrived so much in advance of the raiders that their plans were all made, and they now waited, with eagerness — no less open and joyous in the man than in the boy — for the renewed attack. A reckless young fellow climbed the wall to the sill of one of the side windows and a musket-ball plowed through the flesh of his shoulder.

Another, creeping through the shrubbery at the side of the fort, was shot in the thigh, and lay calling wildly upon his comrades to carry him out of danger.

The sudden desperate clamor of the bell in the Great House yard completed their rout and the raiders took to their heels.

It was Sister Drusia who had rung the bell. She had left the store unnoticed in the escape of Hugh and Major Daventry, and had hurried to alarm the reapers. Her little hands were bruised by the rope, her frail old form swung with it, but she was unconscious of the pain; her soul was pouring itself out in prayer that God would send to the rescue of Harmonie one little, old, bent brother, who, even in the heyday of his youth, would have been no match for the weakest of the raiders, and who had no more courage of the physical kind than a mouse. But she had been Brother Christopher's wife.

Job Silliman, looking backward, had seen Major Daventry and Hugh standing in the door of the granary. The major had lifted his hat in sardonic courtesy, and the act had stung him like a blow. The insolent success and the arrogant assumption of this man were an irritation to his own pride. His wealth, his life of ease, his fame as a marksman, were all causes of a personal hate. The fact that Daventry held slaves in Indiana, contrary to the views of the people, had made him universally unpopular, and gave envy and dislike the dignity of a patriotic sentiment. The taunt awoke the devil in Job Silliman's bitter soul, and he swore he would be avenged.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DAVENTRYS

> Let me have lived my life, not cowered, until
> The unhindered and unhastened hour was here
> So soon — What is there now for me to fear?
>
> EDWARD ROWLAND SILL.

Having enlisted near the end of the Revolution and while he was yet a young man, Major Walter Daventry's taste for adventure was not wholly satisfied by the war, and, at its close, he went to Kentucky, and entered with zest upon the life of a pioneer.

In a short time he met and loved and, with his natural impetuosity, won the daughter of a family recently migrated from Virginia. The Taylors had been ardent Royalists, and were still passionately loyal to King George. Walter Daventry was not a man to miss a quarrel where one was possible, and, in a short time, was on the liveliest of ill-terms with his wife's relatives. As a result, the young couple determined to try their fortunes in the territory, part of which afterward became the state of Indiana.

But the spirit of contention came after them, or, perhaps, it traveled with them, hidden in the depths of one of their great hooded wagons, or, possibly, in

the clumsy carriage in which Madam Daventry rode into the new and roadless country. However that may have been, the quarrel was with them; and the proud woman and the stubborn man kept it alive upon bitterness so increasingly virulent that the time came when they lived upon opposite sides of the great, double log house and refused altogether to speak to each other.

Romance is a strange and capricious goddess, and will sometimes ignore the lure of palaces or the atmosphere of danger and strange events, and seek out the abode of the commonplace, and, lo! it is a-bloom with her rosy light, all throbbing with her strange, enchanting music! She has been known to choose for her votaries the middle-aged, even the old, and to transform their comfortable lives with the delirious vicissitudes of passion, to rejuvenate their dull hearts with longings and poignant joys until they leap and faint as readily as the hearts of boys and maidens.

After years of estrangement this tricksy goddess brought Walter Daventry and his wife together in their own house; to be exact, it was upon the only neutral ground in it — the open passage between the master's house on one side and that of madam on the other. It was twilight of an August day. A silence that can only be described as holy descends upon country homes at that hour and season; and, though the cattle low, dogs howl, and night birds sing, they no

more disturb it than the darting fireflies dispel the soft darkness which they bespangle.

Meeting his wife unexpectedly face to face, Major Daventry, startled, threw out his arm. The gesture had in it something of the protecting tenderness of a happier time. Madam Daventry gasped, and the tears rushed into her eyes. Her husband stopped the eloquent arm half-way, and sighed, half-voluntarily, the foolish name, "Momsie."

Now Judith Daventry had never borne a child, nor had she been heard to grieve over this lack in her woman's experience; but at that name the passage seemed to throng with the dear little ghosts of children. She felt their soft, clinging fingers, their precious weight upon her bosom. She took a quick step toward her husband.

"O Walter! That is what you called me in the first summer after we were wed, when we thought there would be children — and I have never had a child!" she cried, and stretched out her hands.

Daventry's arms went round her as they used to do, but with a purer fervor, a trembling reverence that his first love-making had not known.

Her hair had faded from blond to gray, and her curves and dimples had vanished; but she was still a woman to be wooed, and he became, perforce, a suitor of an ardor, a persistence and fertility of advance and persuasion, that satisfied even her exacting heart, and the very difficulty of the conquest raised her value

in the major's eyes. Their love was like the second crop of strawberries, that are of a brilliancy and fragrance which the spring can not produce.

At the end of a year it brought them a daughter; but in the effort of late maternity the wife faded and died, carrying into her grave and over into the years when she had become a memory all the hallowing charm of their vivid, though late, romance. And by some occult law this romance got into the blood of their daughter. No delicate blossom of early spring was she; no product of pale new emotions and undeveloped personalities. As individual as her parents, as vivid and as concentrated as their love, as certain and as direct as her father's wooing, she was, from her birth, a person to reckon with.

Major Daventry had brought into Indiana half a dozen negro slaves. He was often heard to declare that no man was ever cursed with such unwilling and thankless servitors; and he kept them simply and wholly because his neighbors — the entire population of Indiana, in fact — opposed slavery, and objected to the holding of slaves in that territory. Otherwise, he would have rid himself of such incompetent help in a region where it was always easy to hire intelligent and faithful laborers.

When Madam Daventry was dead the care of her child fell to Aunt Nicey, a faithful, unreliable, devoted, dishonest, tender, inconsistent jumble of most of the virtues and vices of her race. Trillis learned to

govern, to get her own will, to look upon herself as one above the ordinary vicissitudes and obligations of humanity; but she grew naturally and in many directions, since she was restrained in none. Her father became more and more a recluse, and ended by leaving his child almost entirely to the care of Aunt Nicey. Sometimes, indeed, he awoke to the paternal duty, fitted Trillis out with unsuitably elegant clothing, and took her to visit her mother's old friends at Vincennes or St. Louis; after which little journey into the world both father and daughter were glad to return to the freedom and seclusion of their island.

The coming of the Rappites to Harmonie gave Major Daventry opportunity to build a mansion upon the site of the double log house. The bricks were burned in the kilns, the woodwork finished in the mills, and the lintels carved in the quarries of Harmonie. The building itself was erected by the quaint foreign workmen, garbed in blue smocks and steeple-crowned hats, who asked the blessing of God on each day's task.

Naturally, there sprang from this business connection a mutual regard and neighborliness, restricted by differences of training and ideals, but the warmest and most intimate that Major Daventry indulged. Intercourse between George Rapp and himself had always the zest of opposing views. The one was all aglow with the "rights of man," the regeneration of society, and the elusive lights of religious mysticism;

the other was the hereditary champion of birth, of slavery, of limited privileges for the common man, and unlimited ease and luxury for the aristocrat.

One evening in midsummer, when the extreme heat of the day had been tempered by a strong, western breeze, George Rapp strolled down to the river bank, opposite the island. The soft dip of oars in the shadowed water called his attention to a small boat approaching swiftly from the other shore. A little girlish figure was its sole occupant. While he wondered, a clear voice cried:

"Are you one of the brothers? Will you fetch Father Rapp?"

"I am Father Rapp."

"My father is very ill; I was coming for you, sir."

He sprang into the boat, and, seizing the oars, his strong arms soon shot it across the slough and landed it beside the island.

As they climbed the gentle rise to the mansion, Trillis explained that her father had been ill but three or four hours, alarmingly so from the first. The negroes had been so frightened by his appearance and suffering that one by one they had disappeared until only Aunt Nicey was left.

The house loomed before them entirely dark, with the exception of the windows of one front chamber glowing faintly with candle-light. The watch-dog and a couple of hounds met them at the gate and followed somberly to the porch steps. The lower part

of the house stood open to the night and the moonlight. They entered and climbed the stair. The pale light from the chamber streamed into the hall, and against the doorway Aunt Nicey huddled, fast asleep.

Inside, on a massive bed, lay Major Daventry. His face purple, his eyes blazing with fever, he tossed upon the pillows; and his long gray hair, swept back from his powerful face, gave him the leonine look of Zeus. And suitably, for there was no suggestion of wasting; no hint of the softening processes of illness; it was rather the battle of life and death, to which the old soldier had come in the fullness of his strength and spirit. Only a glance was needed to convince Father Rapp that he must lose it.

The candle burned under a screen of green silk which could not protect it wholly from the breeze; and by its ghastly flickering he saw the disorder of the room,— the cups and spoons and bottles, the stewpans which gave out pungent, herbaceous odors, and the rabbit's foot, snake skin, and tiny baby's skull, in a gruesome heap, showing that Nicey had exhausted her skill, even to the charms of the Voodoo, for her master.

At the sound of George Rapp's voice the major turned his empurpled face toward him, and his swollen and twitching lips formed a smile that was like a spasm. At the same instant he caught sight of Trillis in the doorway.

"Send her away," he whispered harshly; "she must not stay here. She must stay down stairs."

Trillis reluctantly backed into the hall and seated herself opposite the sleeping negress. When she had disappeared her father sank more easily into his pillows and lay for a while breathing calmly. Somewhat revived by the few moments of rest, he beckoned George Rapp and said:

"I thank you, suh, for coming. I have to arrange my affaihs, and the time is sho't."

And indeed it seemed almost to have ended, as his voice broke, and the thread of thought was snapped by a spasm of pain. The body began to tremble, the head to shake upon the pillows, the face to twitch, and the limbs to quiver as in an awful ague. Father Rapp aroused the negress, and together they rubbed the cramped limbs, and tried to steady the great frame against the tremor that shook it as the wind shakes a leaf. Trillis had come back to the door, and stood looking in. Father Rapp motioned her to pour out a glass of the fragrant dew-clear brandy of the Harmonie still. It seemed to check the awful trembling for a few moments, and her father, conquering the longing to rest, resumed the settlement of his affairs.

A good man of business, his property and papers were in order, and to these he referred George Rapp, whom he constituted Trillis' guardian in the event of his death.

"Write her mother's people; but be sure they are fit before you give her up to them, if they ask for her. If not, —" His voice rose on the last word in a piteous question. Never until this moment had he realized how friendless his child must be without him.

Father Rapp clasped the icy hands, and warmly and generously exclaimed:

"Why should the child ask shelter of any one? Let her live at Harmonie. We can educate her, we can keep her good and make her happy; and every woman in the village will love her like a mother."

"God! God!" the father murmured in wonder and thanksgiving. His drawn features relaxed, his eyes grew moist; the last care, the last gnawing anxiety of earth had been lifted from him.

"I can trust you, suh," he whispered. "Only I beg you to remember the child's blood; she will never be one of you. Keep her safe until her wings are grown; and when she flies away —"

The voice was shivered into unintelligible sounds. The paroxysm of trembling had returned, and George Rapp and the negress renewed their efforts to soothe the hideous agony.

"Dis de cup o' trem'ling what de Bible tell about," whispered Nicey as she rubbed the quivering arms. "I know dey somepin' wrong day befo' yest'day, when I see Mass' Walter wo'k in de flower-beds — yes, sah, he wo'k! Den he mope all nex' day; an' den dat night he struck down jes' like a ox what's hit

tweenst de eyes. Jabe an' dem holp get him into bed, an' dey hang roun' de place some'eres till sundown, den dey jest nat'ully cut an' run. Took de best boat and cross ovah to Illinoy side. Yes, sah! it de cup o' trem'ling Mass' got to drink now."

George Rapp understood. The sudden attack, the empurpled skin, the terrible suffering meant milk-sickness, that mysterious scourge of new countries which came as the plague comes, and swept men and cattle before it like chaff. So great was the fear of it, he did not wonder that the negroes had fled; the wonder was that there had been one among them brave enough to remain with the victim and his child.

The disease gave little respite; and before Aunt Nicey's explanation was finished it was upon the victim again, leaving him a little weaker and returning with greater violence each time. And now it seemed that the malady had just begun to ravage. The face grew livid beneath the purple, and inexpressibly haggard; foam gathered upon the swollen lips, and the "milk-sweat," as they called it, oozed from the pores of the racked body, streamed down the wasting cheeks, wet the long gray locks, and glistened upon the inert hands. With it came the last interval of conscious ease, during which the major looked at his friend with questioning eyes.

"Where am I going?" he gasped faintly.

"Into God's hands," Father Rapp answered.

The paralyzed muscles of the face could express

no more human passion, but the eyes seemed to fill with chagrin, remorse, fear, horror.

"*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*" Father Rapp exclaimed in confident reply.

The eyes softened, and the lids fell gently over them. A few moments later came the last and most fearful paroxysm, and from it Walter Daventry entered upon that stage of the disease which merged so quietly into death that no man could say at what instant life ceased.

Noticing for the first time the characteristic odor, half-fetid, half-exotic, which seemed condensing in the air, and which was believed to be the medium of contagion, Father Rapp was reminded of his duty to the living; he hurried the negress and the child to the little farm-house across the river occupied by Brother Martin, whom he aroused and dispossessed in their favor.

They left the major lying rigid upon his bed, the candle burning low, the room in the wild disorder of the struggle with death, the house wide open and not even guarded by the dogs; for these, as if they, too, feared the dead, had crept after them and lay hidden in the willows, dejectedly watching the skiff glide across the river.

It fell out that on this same midsummer night no less than twenty armed men, pioneers and squatters and a degenerate Indian or two, crossed the river from Illinois and landed upon Daventry's island at

nearly the same time that George Rapp had left it with Trillis and the negress. They were somewhat disconcerted by the quiet of the unguarded house. A whispered wonder at the absence of dogs or any signs of life ran from one to another of the furtive figures dodging in the shadows from tree to tree as they approached the dwelling. In a few moments they had completely surrounded it, and half a dozen had crept cautiously across the columned porch into the silent hall. Two parties met at the foot of the stairway. The pale light of a candle made a little radiance on the steps and convinced them that there was no ambush in the upper story. With bare feet they stole upward and stood hesitating at the head of the stair.

The silken screen and some articles upon the table threw weird shadows on the walls, and a strange heavy odor spread a nausea among them. Slowly, one after another, they crept forward — dizzy, amazed, and full of superstitious fear. Job Silliman was the first to reach the door and he who came next pushed him into the room, to be pushed after him, in his turn. At last all were inside, standing like images of men in a dream about the great mahogany bed, upon which Major Daventry lay in his state.

No man among them had ever before entered a room so richly furnished. Articles were scattered over it of which not one could have guessed the use,

The bed was hung with pictured chintz as costly as modern silk; the crumpled quilt trailing upon the floor was of embroidered satin; the bed-linen was fine and heavy with needle-work; the wax candle guttered in a huge silver candlestick; and the dressing-table was littered with small articles in the same precious metal.

They were face to face with all the pomp and circumstance of that more fortunate life which had fed Walter Daventry's pride and justified their hatred. And he lay before them in the midst of it, derisive, insolent, triumphant still! As they stood amazed, staring at the majestic figure upon the bed, it was shaken by some soft invisible force. The great body was stirred by a long, tremulous rigor that ran from the feet to the massive head; the chest heaved in a faint sigh, the lips parted, the eyes unclosed, and each of them felt himself caught in that incomprehensible dying gaze — saw it shift, and the light go out of it.

To Job Silliman it seemed that the departing soul had poured into his eyes some last message of denunciation, warning,— and a divine and all-obliterating tenderness. It was as if, even in the duration of that glance, Walter Daventry had had revelation of infinite pity and love, and had passed it on to the soul of his enemy.

"My God!" Silliman groaned, out of that extremity which puts His name upon the lips when

they are powerless to utter any other word. Stooping to close the dead man's eyes, he caught the full significance of the purple spots and the drops glistening upon the livid flesh.

"It's milk-sick!" he cried, and cleared the room with a bound. The others followed in a panic, and soon the whole party was running wildly over the lawn and the box-bordered flower-beds to the river.

George Rapp, coming up the slope from the Indiana side, in his summer garb of white linen, his great height exaggerated by the effect of the moonlight, they took for the Angel of the Resurrection. He, guessing what they had seen, went quietly on his way, knowing that his appearance at that opportune moment would be a defense to the island in the future. And he was right. To all who had taken part in that night's adventure the memory of their enemy dying in his state, able even in death to shame and rout them, was made more impressive by the thought of the majestic figure which had seemed to take form from the shadows at the edge of the woods, and to float toward the house intent upon its mission, indifferent to men and their crimes.

The next day the iron door of Madam Daventry's little stuccoed tomb opened to admit the body of her husband, which was carried there by Rappite brothers, and left beside her, with no ceremony but a simple German prayer.

Two weeks proved that neither Trillis nor her

nurse was to suffer from infection. After that time they were brought into the village and installed at the school-house with Sister Ermengarde and Brother Laurence. The other negroes, finding freedom sweet, returned no more to the island.

In those days it took a long time to receive an answer to a letter, and those which George Rapp sent to Madam Daventry's people did not bring complete returns before the next spring, and did not then contain anything to alter the course of her daughter's life. Trillis remained with the Harmonists, returning, eventually, to her own home upon the island, where she spent her summers in the care of Sister Bena, Aunt Nicey, and such a force of brothers as the necessities of crops and cattle-raising required.

The simple worthiness of the communists made it easy for Trillis to be good and happy with them. She won their love by both faults and virtues, charming them by little, imperious ways, bursts of hot temper, fastidious tastes, airs and graces that were all new to their experience; and she loved them heartily in return. Coming into womanhood with a sudden rich flowering of her nature, she needed the sympathy and guidance of some wise and tender woman; and, strange to say, Brother Laurence, the schoolmaster, so filled the requirements of this stage of her growth that she seldom felt the lack. He taught her all she chose to learn, even of mathematics and philosophy, which were held in his day as meat too

strong for the constitution of the feminine mind. In the same class with Hugh, she often distanced him and filled the schoolmaster's ideal of a student. Hugh made a boundless disturbance in his dream of life; Trillis melted into it and added elements of sweetness and light.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PLANTING

A crowd of hopes
That thought to sow themselves like wingèd seeds,
Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of life delicious.

TENNYSON.

Spring, in southern Indiana, is often as ardent as summer. Upon a day of such a season four Rappites planted the field above the sheep-cave. They were Brother Martin and Hugh Veneno, who covered the corn which Sister Rosina Rapp and Trillis Daventry dropped for them. The steam came up from the moist furrows and seemed to add to the heat of the sun. There was a mist in the distances, not bluish like that of Indian summer, but shot with gold and hints of rose-color. Coupled with the restless lassitude that possessed the workers, it indicated that a thunderstorm was brooding in the unseasonable heat.

Sister Rosina Rapp, having inherited her father's resolute spirit, worked steadily on, though the sweat

was dropping from her round, pale brows and her prominent, light blue eyes were ringed with fatigue. Brother Martin was inured to springs and all weathers, and his hoe glanced in the sun and played in the furrows with rhythmic steadiness. Hugh's was often lying on the ground, while he wiped the perspiration from his face or pushed back the moist hair that waved about his brows in the flowing, undulating lines that give grace and virility to the portraits of the young Alexander.

Trillis, working at a parallel row, could not help looking up when he did so. They were not very close; yet by some subtle avenue, his movements, his very changes of expression reached her. When he sighed, she pitied his weariness; when he lifted his head, she saw him, though her own was bent over the dropping corn. As a consequence, Brother Martin's deft hoe had often to wait for grain to cover, while between Sister Rosina and Hugh the long yellow-beaded furrows lengthened constantly. When they were near the sugar-maple grove which bounded the field at its lowest level, Brother Martin suggested a change of partners.

"Brother Hugh does not cover so fast as Sister Rosina drops," he said, "and Sister Bena cautioned me not to overwork Sister Trillis. It were best that you young ones should take the upper furrows."

Accordingly, Hugh, with his hoe upon his shoulder,

and Trillis, with her bag of shelled corn, crossed the field to the top of the hill. From this elevation the rolling fields, the full flood of the river, the encompassing woods, and one cozy farmstead could be seen. Their outlines were blurred and blended by the dreamy atmosphere that thickened in the distance to a haze, tinged with green and flushed with saffron from the swelling buds of the blue-gum, or the chinkapin-oak. This faint and shifting color spread upward to the sky and tinted the brooding clouds, also, with the hues of spring.

City dwellers are subject to disturbing waves of human feeling. Politics, civic reforms, religion, social ambitions, involve them all by turns in a common interest. Those who live in small communities are equally responsive, but it is, perforce, to the moods of nature rather than to those of humanity.

Hugh and Trillis, young and eager for experience — which to youth means chiefly sensation — were as helplessly subject to this spring weather as any pair of young trees budding in its moist warmth. They were unconsciously involved in the universal growth. The restlessness of things pushing upward, bursting bonds and unfolding, of embryos uncurling and wings starting, stirred corresponding impulses in them. They longed to drowse and dream, and had the intuition that drowsing and dreaming might bring to them something sweet, and strange, and vital.

The corn-planting suffered from their preoccupation. They could see that Brother Martin and Sister Rosina were untouched by their restlessness, but worked steadily across the field. Hugh, leaning on his hoe, called Trillis' attention to them.

"I wonder if we shall ever be so old and so steady as that, Sister? They work right along, and seem never to think of stopping to rest in the sun or even to go fishing."

"Fishing! Sister Rosina?" Trillis laughed to think of it. "She would believe it wicked."

Hugh was tempted to philosophize.

"I wonder why old people set such value upon work — and time, too. They are always worrying for fear they will be short of time; and then they go and use up all they have in work! The wickedness comes in trying to work on such a day as this."

"We are not sinning very hard now; and it's going to rain."

"I wish it would! Then Otho and Peter and I would go fishing."

"I couldn't go fishing. I should have to weave."

"But you used to do things like that. Why have you quit? You like it still, don't you?"

"Of course; but I am grown up. One never has any fun after that. A girl doesn't — not at Harmonie. If my father were living, it would be different. I should wear beautiful clothes and jewelry, and dance at balls."

She was looking wistfully into dreamland. Hugh's face flushed.

"That would leave me out; for I couldn't dance at your balls in a hideous, old, black silk coat and a Rappite hat," he said bitterly.

Trillis laughed at this picture; then, suddenly realizing his painful thoughts, she answered in a gentle voice:

"We are idlers, and the rain will catch us."

They worked diligently for a few moments, when Hugh threw down his hoe and declared:

"It is a shame to have to work to-day. This hoe weighs a thousand pounds. Stop, Trillis!"

"Why, you lazy boy! But it is close, isn't it? The wind is rising."

She looked off over the river, across which the long ripples were racing through the shadows of the clouds. She had pushed back her straw hat, and the tumbled curls shading her face enhanced its wistful melancholy. Hugh, looking at her, had a revelation. "How deep and clear her eyes are!" he thought for the first time. Then his gaze, sliding downward, paused at her mouth, whose sweetness pierced him. He was on the point of telling her how beautiful she was. His tone recalled her from her dream.

"Were you going to say something?" she asked.

"It is too warm for you to work like this. Give me the corn; I will drop and cover, too. Only, you

must sit on that stump there and watch me," he said gently.

"I am not tired, Brother; it isn't the work. Only — I don't like to see you work either, when you feel it so."

"O, I'm merely lazy; and I want to do something else — something big and great! Trillis, I want to be such a man as your father was, gallant, brave, successful. I could; but I should have to leave Harmonie."

"Oh!" she cried sharply.

He looked at her and saw that the line of her brows and the marble fairness of her forehead were wonderful.

"Would you mind? Would you ask me not to go?" he inquired.

"I should mind," she said steadily; "but I should not try to keep you here. Have you been thinking of this for long?"

"No; only at times, when I feel as I do to-day; as if I were tied down by something I must break away from. A man doesn't like to be bound; he wants to be free, and he likes to do things and to think up new ways. Brother Hanno says that men in the world are striving to get ahead of one another. I should like that."

The strange blue of his eyes deepened, and his big, loose, boyish figure seemed suddenly to grow tense with manhood. Trillis, watching him, had her

turn at revelation. How handsome, how strong and brave he was!

"And there are many other things besides fighting," he continued in a softer tone. "A man likes to make the world better; not by shutting himself up to pray for it as monks and Rappites do, but by working for it — helping it."

"Oh! I have felt that!" cried Trillis, with enthusiastic sympathy. "If I were a man, I should want to do that."

While they talked, the river turned from saffron to lead color; and Brother Martin and Sister Rosina crossed the wheat-field to the village. The wind gathered in the Illinois woods and rushed across the river, driving the clouds before it; but they heeded nothing until the rain was upon them.

"Quick!" cried Hugh; "this way — down the bluff to the sheep-cave!"

The gathered drainage of the fields had formed a little stream, which had for years been leaping down into the woods at one spot. Sometimes it was swollen by rains, and had been able with the flow of many seasons to cut a section from the face of the bluff and to dig a basin for itself at its foot. Down the path of the waterfall Hugh and Trillis climbed, slipping upon the wet rocks, snatching each other from the treacherous channel, and laughing in merry rivalry with the laughing stream.

The sheep-cave was only a semicircular chamber

dug out of the soft sandstone by the action of long-vanished streams. It was floored with fine, dry sand; roofed and walled with the corrugated stone, in which grew velvety mosses, lichens that seemed always to be beaded with moisture, and the wonderful walking fern. The water from the little cataract went dimpling past it, and the beech woods sloped upward in front, shutting it in a charming seclusion.

"Aren't we lucky?" Hugh cried, as they ran into it, just at the instant of the cloud-burst. Trillis laughed, since she was too breathless to answer; besides, the tremendous roar of the rain would have drowned her voice. They sat side by side on the sand, shrinking together innocently, as two children, rejoicing in companionship and shelter. Without a word between them, suddenly, as these things always come, and by the same impulse, they drew apart, flushing and avoiding each other's eyes. In the same instant they had looked out through the curtain of rain upon the empty woods, and at the same time had seen themselves — not children now — alone in the empty cave.

Trillis had the woman's instinct for perfunctory speech.

"I had almost forgotten the cave. Do you come here often?"

"Yes. Nobody comes, I think, but me. I feel it is all my own."

"What do you do here? Do you come to read?"

"No — I just believe I will show you." He sprang up and brought from a crevice at the back of the cave a little, rude, wooden model of a machine. As timidly as a little boy he set it down before her.

"Oh! Did you make it, Brother? Will it run?" she cried eagerly.

The question blew away all self-consciousness, and he sat down, with outspoken delight in a girl who could sympathize in masculine tastes like this. He proudly explained every part of the toy to her, and, finding no flaw in her interest or her comprehension, he ended by describing just how each part would look, could he have the proper materials for constructing it.

"Wood is so clumsy, and some parts I could not make at all; though, you see, I have used about all the different kinds of wood that grow around here; some because they were hard, and some that were pliable, and some that wouldn't split. Still, it is only a poor thing."

"Why don't you show it to Father Rapp and ask him for the proper materials? He would get them."

"Oh, it seems so childish! And yet I feel sure I can make something worth while some day."

"Why, of course! Let me tell Father Rapp."

She looked up at him with a coaxing smile. In his boyish awkwardness he dared not consent, since it would appear that he was himself too cowardly to ask

the favor; which, being the exact state of the case, made him the more sensitive.

"I would love to tell him. Let me!"

She was looking down, examining the model, holding it at different angles, as if it were a bonnet. Hugh had never thought of looking at it in that way, as a thing of beauty in itself; indeed, he had never really seen it, his vision being obscured by the great machine it represented. It was a pretty thing; and, if it would please her ——

"Oh, well! I don't mind his knowing, if you would like to tell. Of course, I don't think much of it myself."

"Well, you ought to. Oh! I wish I were a boy and could do things!"

She folded her hands in her lap and leaned back, with a sigh, against the cave wall, looking very helpless and sad.

"I think it's very nice to be a girl; at least, I like for you to be one," he said, looking kindly at her.

"If I were a boy, I'd come here with you and help make machines. You'd want me then."

"I'd like it better, if you'd stay a girl — and come. I don't need help, but you could watch me."

"I wish I could; but I suppose I wouldn't be permitted," she answered sadly.

"I don't see why."

"Because I am a girl. Don't you think girls

at Harmonie should be treated exactly as boys? They can't do as girls do out in the world; they can't dance, and dress fashionably, and have beaux ——" She broke off with a little embarrassed laugh. Hugh looked up with a flush.

"I don't see what makes you say 'beaux,' as if you would like a dozen of them," he said petulantly.

"A dozen?" She leaned toward him with a mischievous dimple showing in one cheek. "No, I won't say that; but, truly now, I should like about — six!"

She whispered the number solemnly. Hugh drew back angrily.

"I'm glad you don't live in the world. You'd be a coquette."

"What is a coquette?"

"A coquette is a wicked, vain creature who wants all men to love her."

"Then — I'm afraid I'm wicked and vain. Does it make you despise me?"

He could not be sure of her sincerity. Her eyes were veiled and her face very grave; but her tone rang a little false. At any rate, it was a good time to give a salutary lesson, while he was in earnest.

"You know nothing about these things, and you never will know. The world is very wicked; and you should be thankful you are protected from its temptations — a weak girl like you."

"Oh!" she replied with beautiful docility. "Of course I'm thankful. Now, you wouldn't be in dan-

ger, if you went into the world-life. You are so strong; nobody could tempt you."

He drew himself up and threw out his chest, feeling quite as strong as she seemed to think him. She continued with an entire change of tone:

"But, Brother, don't you think it possible for temptations to come, even here in Harmonie?"

Hugh looked through the curtain of rain along the white, columned aisles of the beech wood. He saw a bedraggled blackbird, with gleaming red epaulets, hunting worms by the side of the little stream which drained the basin of the waterfall. He saw no other living creature, no possible source of temptation, and brought his eyes to Trillis' face. It gleamed in the obscurity of the cave like a flower. Her dark eyes shone out of it, large and mysterious; her sweet lips parted, as if she were waiting for something. He forgot what they had been talking about. She was beautiful; more, she was something sweet, and strange, and — different. That was it — different from every one he knew, and, most of all, from himself. And he had only just found it out! He had no impulse to put this discovery into words; it was too new. He must think it over, get a firm grasp upon it; in the meantime he must conceal it.

Trillis, sitting quietly in the shadow, was making explorations in the same new land of feeling. She had been alone with Hugh often and often; yet it was as if this were the first time, and the fact had

some strange significance. Was it the screen of rain that seemed to shut them into a seclusion deeper than she had ever known? Was it the voice of the waterfall? Was it something nearer than these, a consciousness of Hugh's personality, his youth, his strength, his sex? She tried to break the spell.

"Will they think we are lost, at the village?" she asked, and blushed because her voice trembled. Hugh seemed to return to her from dreamland.

"I don't care if they do!" He flushed and fidgeted with the tremendous significance of his reply. Trillis justified it by turning away her eyes and blushing more violently.

"Let us get lost again," Hugh whispered, leaning forward.

"No, no!" Trillis laughed nervously, tossed her head and tried to treat the matter lightly. Then she turned slowly toward Hugh a sobered face, veiled in drooping curls. Her dark eyes burned in their shadow with a new light; she let it shine upon him for a moment while she murmured:

"I do not care if we do."

At that instant the bell at the Great House rang.

"They are calling us. It has quit raining," Hugh said. His face had glowed at that look of hers with a sudden, uncomfortable heat; this new emotion was not altogether welcome, despite its sweetness. He would not have even her who had aroused it know what a boundless disturbance it was creating

within him. He arose somewhat abruptly, and led the way out of the cave.

Some strange impulse moved this boy, who had never seen a courtesy shown a woman for the mere sake of her sex, to turn and offer his hand to help Trillis over the little stream in the hollow. But she, feigning not to see, sprang lightly as a deer to the opposite bank, treating him as she went to another swift glance through the drift of her curls that recalled the tide of hot blood to his face.

They climbed the slope of the beech woods in sobered and tremulous consciousness of new forces stirring between them. Half-way up, Trillis paused and looked backward. The sun was shining low through the beeches, striking the white and emerald from their boles and lighting the red in the varnished twigs and buds. It turned the wet, dead leaves into a carpet of golden browns and indistinguishable dusky hues, rich as an Eastern rug. It shone upon the white sand of the cave, and glittered at a thousand points where crystals, or gathered moisture, reflected it like gems. With a smile half-bashful, half-mischievous, but touched with some sweet prophecy of feeling, only half-revealed, she waved her hand.

"Good-by, dear cave!" she murmured.

Then, wheeling with an instant change to the irresponsible gaiety of childhood, she cried:

"I will race you to the well!" and, laughing, led the chase to the village.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIRST TRYST

The day is short, the evening cometh fast;
The time of choosing, Love, will soon be past;
* * * * *
Love, let us love ere it be late — too late!

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

"Missy, you know what ail you?"

Nicey, Trillis' negro nurse, was clearing the dinner-table at which her young mistress lingered, leaning upon her elbow and gazing abstractedly toward the window. When Nicey spoke she brought her eyes, dark and soft with dreams, back to the black face opposite her and said wonderingly:

"Why, nothing ails me, Mommy!"

The negress shook her head. "You don't know it, mebbe, but you not been yo'se'f this whole enduring spring. But now it borne in on me whar the trouble is. You know I was your ma's nuss, just like I was you'n. Well, Miss Judith's brung up by her fambly, like she ought to be, so when things happen to her she know what to do. When Mass' Walter fall out with her people, she feel awful, but she don't let on, she just hol' up her haid and say: 'I got

to beah this trouble like a lady,' and she done it. When he quarrel with her, she set her mouth and say, 'I'll beah this trouble like a lady,' and she do it like she say she will. Then when they made up, and you come 'long and ev'y thing promise so faih, and she heah she bound to die, she say them same brave words, and lay a-smiling and 'ceive ol' Death with mannahs, like he any gen'lman. Now, honey, I wish to gracious you do more like your ma'd do ef she was in your place!"

Nicey came round the table and began to smooth the dark curls with her tremulous old hands.

"Your ma'd nevah a-worked in the fiel's, child, not for nobody! She nevah done nothing but lady's work in all her born days."

"But, Mommy, there is nothing else to do. I don't like to be so different from all the others, when they are so kind to me."

"Huh!" said Nicey with a toss of her head. "They bound to be kind to Mass' Walter Daventry's daughter! But, honey, you mighty fur above these heah pore creatures. I wish you'd recollect what I tell you about your ma; she'd nevah forget 'at she's quality, no mattah what happen. She'd say her same words: 'I got to beah this like a lady,' and these heah Rappites 'd feel a heap o' difference 'twixt them and her! She'd hol' up her haid — high!

"Now this brings me plumb ter the point where I know what ail you — it's your blood a-kicking up a

row insides you 'bout the way you do. Young people like you is don't un'erstand what they is. You think you only Trillis Daventry, with nobody but yo'se'f to please, but the truth is you's a whole gang of Taylors, and Daventrys, and Dorseys and Greenberrys, and you got 'm all to please! They mighty mettlesome folks, and the last one of 'm used to having his own way. Ever' time you do common — a-hoein' or a-drappin' co'n, like these Rappites — all that old uppity blood have tantrums inside of you, and neah torment the life out'n you. Oh, I know it, honey! I been watching you; some days you chipper, and some you donsey; then again, you fly off the handle if anybody point a fingah at you.

"It all come from you going against your blood and what's been handed down to you. But you going to do different now, ain't you? I told that curly-head Hugh so this very morning. I told him g'long, Miss Trillis bohn a lady, and she don't have nothing to do with fiel' work, and all sech projeckin' with things 't don't become her blood! I told him g'long, you ain't nevah goin' chop out no more co'n!"

"When was Hugh here? Did he ask for me?" Trillis cried, with light-hearted eagerness.

"He ast for a drink!" Nicey said. "Huh! I told him the rivah's full of watah, the creek's full, the spring keep right on runnin', night and day, and the well in the hoss-lot ain't nevah been dry yet! Yessum, I done him just thataway."

She ended in a note of triumph; but Trillis could think only of the joyous fact that Hugh had wanted her.

"Where are they working? On the island?" she asked.

"Yessum," Nicey answered sorrowfully, "they in the rivahside fiel', but I does hope you ain' going to bemean yo'se'f ——"

"Oh, don't worry, Mommy," interrupted Trillis gaily, "I'll just go down to watch them, it is so lovely outside. I won't work; at least, I don't think I shall."

"Ef you does I don' see how I goin' to stan' it," said Nicey ruefully.

"Why, 'like a lady'!" Trillis laughed, as she darted up the stair. Looking down from the upper hall, she saw the old negress standing disconsolate in the doorway, and she gave her a tender little smile and blew a kiss from her finger-tips.

She danced into her chamber, her very feet light with happiness, her cheeks warm with it, her eyes cleared to the beauty around her. What a world! What a throbbing and thrilling of joy in the air, in the sunshine, and most of all within herself, lifting her like wings!

With the woman's instinct to adorn herself for love, she dressed with fastidious care for the visit to the corn-fields, putting on her finest linens under her ordinary blue Rappite dress, and taking a pleasure in

the sense of absolute freshness and daintiness. For Trillis, motherless, brought up by a community of nun-like women, where the very name of love was monopolized by an antagonistic class of emotions, was utterly helpless before the passion when it came to her. She had no conventional examples, she knew nothing of all the little deceits and concealments which experience has furnished women for defense against themselves; she was caught in a whirlpool of ecstasy and gave herself up without a struggle. She would have given students of the emotions, had there been any at Harmonie, an excellent opportunity to distinguish between the natural and the acquired impulses of the master passion. For instance, she adorned herself for the meeting with Hugh,— the casual meeting in the presence of the other workers,— as carefully as a worldly woman might for a tryst of secret love. But while such a woman would be deliberately preparing for the tribute to the senses, which every woman's love must eventually pay, Trillis, untouched as yet by any impure thought, only wished to feel herself thoroughly worthy of Hugh's admiration, without spot or blemish, even in non-essentials.

As she went along the path to the corn-fields, she reflected that it had been almost three months since she and Hugh had found shelter in the sheep-cave, and that, in spite of his request and her promise, they had not been alone together since. Indeed, they could not be said to have been together at all, in any true

sense, though they had met daily. There was always some intangible barrier between them. Hugh was silent or brusk; she, strangely timid or possessed by a saucy spirit which tempted her to tease him. And yet their new relation had developed even in these unsatisfactory meetings. The words spoken in the presence of others, commonplace though they were, had seemed to throb with hidden significance. Quickly-shifted glances conveyed volumes of feeling; little accidents of standing together beside a loom in the weaving-house, or coming out of church side by side, had kept her happy. At night the recollection of these things had mingled with her dreams, and she had lived a strange life of longing and joy, of searching and soothing, and a hundred vague new emotions, from which she awoke with a sense of waiting for something that was at once sweet and painful.

But this afternoon, on her way to the riverside field, she was a care-free girl, so light-hearted that she danced rather than walked.

The corn-field lay spread out before her like a web of green brocade shimmering in the sun. Half a dozen figures of brothers and sisters under their huge straw hats were scattered over it. In the very edge of the field, Hugh was chopping out the corn with vigorous strokes, and Trillis thought how fortunate it was that he was so easily found, and did not suspect him of being there by design.

"I hope he won't notice me before them all," she

said to herself; but when she came near, and he did not look up, she stopped with a sudden pang. "Oh, if he would but come to meet me!" she cried to her heart.

As if he had heard, Hugh threw down the hoe and came. His strong young figure gave grace and beauty to the clumsy trousers and the blue cotton smock. The essential fairness of his skin showed on his neck and on the upper part of the beautiful bare arms; he stepped with the pride of his strength, his broad head carried with a certain majesty, his shoulders squared and rigid. He had a trick of pushing his hair back from his brow. It was long, of a bright brown color, and waved only enough to bring out the golden lights in it. The Greek sculptors knew the value of such a background for virile young faces, and used it to suggest strength and beauty in combination. Hugh's eyes were of a rare blue; long, heavy-lidded, and languid in their ordinary expression, which made them the more compelling when their full gaze, glowing with enthusiasm, was to be met. Trillis dared not meet it to-day. She saw only that he was glad to have her there, and, forgetting Nicey, deaf to the voices of dead ancestors, she meekly took up a hoe and began to work beside him.

They kept up a desultory conversation, but messages charged with light and warmth seemed to pass between them in some other language. Their hearts were like birds that forage in the grass, held to earth

in twittering delight, yet with lifted and fluttering wings always on the point of escaping.

In the late afternoon they were working side by side in the margin of the field nearest the river. The corn on the island was forward; its gleaming blades were as long as swords, and the plumed tops reached Trillis' cheek. The soil was rich and warm, virgin of fertilizers, and odorous yet of the leaves whose dust had built it up through the innumerable, untilled summers of the past. The fierce sun-heat brought out the cloying odor of the corn juice, but the breeze from the river shifted and dispersed it to the saving of the surfeited human sense. Hugh paused at his work and looked out over the water.

"I have always liked this side of the island best," he said.

"Why, so have I," Trillis answered; and they blushed, as at the discovery of some subtle bond.

"I come here, sometimes at sunset," she added, to cover her confusion. "Oh, I wish I could describe it to you!"

"I wish I could come with you!" he answered softly, and fell to hoeing diligently. Trillis followed his example. Brother Martin came from the shade of a cottonwood where he had been resting and chose the row next them. He was a jovial old fellow, and entertained them with German jokes and "good stories," and did not in the least mind the fits of abstraction that seized them at intervals.

When the call to *vesperbrod* sounded from the Daventry kitchen, the workers all went thither together, only agreeably tired from the moderate labor, and full of their habitual kindly cheer and good fellowship.

But Trillis suddenly found her heart, that had been so light, very heavy. She was full of puzzling thoughts; the thing she waited for had not really come; she had been so foolishly eager, so impatient, that she had mistaken other things for it. Hugh did not feel as she did; perhaps there had been nothing in the glances and the words from which she had wrested a meaning and deceived herself.

When the brothers and sisters were going down the bank to the ferry, and Sister Bena and she were escorting them, Hugh came boldly to her side and said:

"I am coming back to see how the river looks at night. Will you be there?"

When Trillis stole out to keep their first tryst, all the island lay quiet beneath the rising moon, the trees, huddling together in masses of shadow, were haunted by wraiths of mist and broken lights. The cries of night birds came to her as warnings that made her heart leap and faint, while she sped guiltily across moonlit spaces or ran shuddering through the shadows; for, suddenly, from the darkness or from within herself, where sensations and emotions were gathering and shifting, a new feeling seized her. She had never

been afraid in her life, but now her heart stood still; she shivered, and her eyes explored the night, seeking for dread things in it; and at the same time a soft delicious helplessness, a new dependence tempered it all to a joy.

"Hugh, O Hugh!" she cried, under her breath, and ran through the shadowed, sweet-smelling aisles of the corn, all her body straining to the shelter of his presence.

There he stood, dim in the moonlight, but to her eyes plainly beautiful in all manly ways, a refuge, a tower of strength, a nestling place for the fears and dim longings of a girl's awaking heart.

He turned when he heard the scraping of corn blades against her flying skirt, and came with swift steps to meet her. Finding her trembling, even while she was beaming with the intoxication of feeling, he laughed. It was a low and sympathetic sound, that proclaimed his participation in her young delight. While they stood facing each other, smiling, palpitating, each for the moment forgetting the other in the wonder of new sensations, Nature, the priestess, swung wide the noiseless door and received them into her holy of holies — the first love.

It was the place and the hour for such a ceremony. Night and the moon, essentials since the first darkening and silvering of Eden, were there. There were also the lapping of gentle waters, the odors that growing things yield so generously to the night airs,

the faint twitter of sleepy birds, and the fine, small voices of night insects — delicate, ephemeral, softly-flitting creatures, who know love, also.

"You were frightened!" Hugh announced joyously. He had caught her hands in his and stood holding them, his handsome head bending over hers, his voice resonant with protecting tenderness. "I should have come to meet you."

When she heard this, Trillis rejoiced in her cowardice; she need never be brave again where fear was so rewarded.

"Next time, I shall be at the edge of the woods," Hugh assured her, as they seated themselves side by side on the sand.

"Next time?" the girl's heart echoed ecstatically; were there to be other times then? She had the sensation of lifting wings for a long flight; but paused, her feet still upon earth, to ask:

"Do you think we shall meet like this again, Hugh?"

"Why not?" he answered, exulting in a new manliness. "If I want to come as much as I did to-night, nothing shall prevent me. You will come too, Trillis?"

Her heart would have answered "yes," but Nature does not bungle; the conventions with which the woman's love is at once enhanced and defended, are planted in the heart with love itself. Trillis was suddenly wary.

"Perhaps you will not want me?" she said, drawing a little away from him, and looking off at the darkling river.

"But I shall. I shall always want you after this, Trillis."

Hugh was palpitating with the tremendous import of these words; he drew closer to her unconsciously, but he dared not look into her eyes. His thoughts were revelations, quickly succeeding one another, fugitive pictures of beautiful things, vivid as light itself, yet all shimmering in a rosy adumbration. Trillis was not the Trillis whom he had known from childhood, played with, quarreled with, met daily upon the common ways of life, but some illuminated presence, more lovely and more to be reverenced than if it were angelic. She was femininity, transcendent, divine,— the eternal womanly sitting beside him inviting and promising. To touch her hand would have been profanation. When a quick movement of her head swung a curl outward, and it brushed his sleeve, his spirit quivered under its sudden, unexpected touch as if it were a blow from some tremendous, unchained force.

The things that lovers say when all the air is shivering with the impact of welding forces, all the earth quaking under the feet of Love, and daylight and darkness are equally nothing in the blinding glory of his countenance, are not to be reported. Words can no more recall the illuminated converse

of these moments than the shed shell of the pupa can represent the butterfly in the sun.

Hugh "skipped" stones over the agate water, and Trillis praised him — a childish pastime in which they had engaged often before. But whole cycles of sensation and revelation lay between the last time and this. To-night Hugh put forth his strength and skill like a knight of old who tilted beneath his lady's eyes, and the clapping of Trillis' hands when he succeeded was her declaration to the river and the silver moon that Hugh's skill was her pride, his success her joy.

"We were never together at night before," said Hugh, his voice, not quite at home upon the deeper notes of manhood, breaking under the stress of meaning when he added, "alone."

"No," Trillis answered; and the suggestive solitude and intimacy of night moved her toward him with a little nestling impulse which his heart understood. It swelled with tenderness, and he moved to meet her. But the reverential wonder of young love was between them, and while their shadows met and clung together they were still apart.

Though the body lingered as yet, outside the sacred precincts, mind and spirit were meeting in the mystic circle. It seemed to them that they thought the same thoughts, mounted together the same spires of feeling.

The moon had reached the deep blue of the zenith,

the river was fretted silver, gleaming at the crest of every wave, the woods and hills had softened to the delicacy of a landscape of dreamland, but Hugh and Trillis were indifferent to all this beauty. The voices within were making such entrancing music they could but listen to them. The strain had been joyous, and their hearts had danced together to its quick measures; now it was changing, softening, teasing them with delicious pains and sweet melancholy. Hugh was the first to put it into words.

"Trillis," he asked, "are you ever lonely? Not because you are alone, but because there is no one who is all your own to love you?"

"Have you felt that, too?" she questioned.

"But you have had some one, Trillis; you had your father, and can remember his love. I have had no one."

His voice wrung her heart. He lay back on the sand, and she saw the glitter of tears upon his eyelashes. She put out her hand, very timidly, and, not quite daring to touch him, withdrew it with a blush. Sympathy and the assurance that he was never to suffer more from this cause, trembled upon the verge of speech, but she only murmured:

"I am sorry, Hugh."

He drew a little nearer, until he could look straight up into her eyes.

"If — if you could love me, Trillis!"

"I?" she whispered, "I? O Hugh!"

"Will you, Trillis? Will you?"

He sat up and looked boldly at her now, his eyes searching hers with a gaze that dazzled — but she was not quite ready. Quick fears thrilled her, a strange reluctance chilled her; with her foot within the gates she hesitated, and Hugh felt she was slipping away from him, dropping behind in the advance into this undiscovered country, into which they had wandered together.

"Don't," she pleaded, "we should not talk like this."

"Why not, when we feel it?" Hugh answered, in the merciless tone of masculine logic. Being familiar, it drew Trillis back to the safe ground of their accustomed relations. She sprang up.

"The whole household will be searching for me by now," she said; "I must go."

"But you wanted to come?" Hugh asked, reluctant to leave this spot of blissful new experience.

"But now I want to go home again. Come." She was climbing the bank, he following lingeringly.

"Stop, Trillis, until you tell me — Do you want to leave me? Do you not care at all?"

"Ask me some other time," she laughed, as she ran.

Hugh watched her flying figure until it thinned to shadow in the moonlight. "She will be afraid and come back," he assured himself. And though his heart urged him to follow, he was not so much in

love as to be indifferent to the triumph of will; and so he waited, listening long for the sound of her returning footsteps.

Trillis was afraid, and she, too, listened for steps that were to overtake her. Since she did not hear them at all, she carried a wounded heart to bed with her, and sobbed herself to sleep, having tasted in one short day an astonishing variety of the sweets and the bitters of Love.

## CHAPTER IX

### FATHER AND SON

> Nay, rather let them find their life
> Bitter and sweet, fulfilled of strife,
> Restless with hope, vain with regret,
> Trembling with fear, most strangely set
> 'Twixt memory and forgetfulness.
>
> WILLIAM MORRIS.

Since the day when Hanno had found him lying beside the wall of the pleasure ground with a broken thigh, Brother Laurence's life had been much as he had planned it. It was extraordinarily free from the intrusion of human affairs and the importunities of human affections. Although he had eagerly espoused George Rapp's theories of economic reform in the beginning, he soon shrank from the activity their realization involved; and from the day of the tragedy he relinquished the important part he had held in the affairs of Harmonie, retaining only the post of schoolmaster, because it required little of that giving of himself which was distasteful to him.

At times he lighted with enthusiasm, displaying that rare gift of teaching which is bestowed only upon fine natures, and won the love of his pupils by it. For Otho Rapp, Elsie Barwé, little Yetta, and

the others he had a faint, indulgent affection, and they asked no more. But Hugh, tormented by a mysterious love for the schoolmaster, could not be content with this meager return. Petted by everybody at Harmonie, the acknowledged favorite of Father Rapp, who did not hesitate to speak of the high place he meant the lad should some day hold in the government of the community, Hugh smarted under the failure to win an answering love from the one source whence he most desired it. The gentleness with which his advances were repulsed could not prevent the sting of wounded pride; and as he grew older he learned to repress the impulses of his unwelcomed affection.

The schoolmaster, although he may have felt the attraction of the handsome, lovable boy, had no other feeling in connection with him so strong as fear,—fear of betraying their relation, fear of loving Hugh and suffering through him, and fear of the spirit of Leah Gordon that haunted her son's blue eyes. It portended the importunate feeling, the love of life, and the hunger for joy which Laurence von Korassel persuaded himself had made the failure of their marriage and the tragedy of her fate. There was, also, the utmost difference of intellectual gifts. The father was a dreamer seeking unusable and detached knowledge and ruminating upon it; the son wished to learn only what was practical and actual. In this natural antagonism between the contemplative eigh-

teenth century and the scientific spirit which was to mark the nineteenth, Brother Laurence found another source of fear and excuse for coldness. Yet he was not consistently indifferent. As it had been with his wife, it was with this unacknowledged son: his heart awoke at times and clamored for its rights.

Upon the night of the lovers' first tryst beside the river, some unaccountable paternal intuition fastened upon him and tormented him with the presentiment of evil to Hugh. His morbid fear of betraying his relation to his son prevented him from going openly to Number Two and asking for him; but an unnatural cunning, developed by years of secret anxieties, enabled him to learn that Hugh was not in the dormitory. Instinct drew him to the river bank, where he startled the returning lover by emerging from the willows as he leaped upon the shore.

"I saw you coming from the island," Brother Laurence said timidly.

"Yes," Hugh answered, and awaited some further revelation of the schoolmaster's purpose. They walked side by side for some yards before it came.

"Will you sit a few moments here, under the pecan tree, that we may talk together?"

The gaunt figure, the white face and burning eyes, and the plaintive voice worked their accustomed spell upon Hugh. His heart swelled at this slight response to his lifelong interest, and he replied eagerly:

"If you wish it, Brother," and led the way to the

great tree that stood alone in remarkable symmetry and vigor.

"Hugh," the schoolmaster began, "did Father Rapp send you to the island to-night?"

"No; I — I just went."

Perhaps the tone of a detected school-boy recalled their old relation, for the schoolmaster spoke with authority:

"You will tell me why you went."

"I think we may as well go home. If you tell Father Rapp what you have seen, I shall make a clean breast to him. No one else has the right to question me."

Hugh's words were full of resentment, though his heart was yearning to open all its secrets. Brother Laurence, on his side, was longing for this confidence. What if he should lay his arm across the boy's shoulders and, drawing the handsome head close, should say: "Confide in me as a son confides in his father"? Because he dared not, he sighed; and to Hugh the sigh was an appeal, and he said with boyish sweetness:

"Brother, don't think I went to the island for any harm — at least — Well, I don't see how my going could harm Father Rapp — I went to see Sister Trillis." Brother Laurence started and turned upon him.

"My God!" he cried hoarsely; "I would have died to save you from this!" After a long silence, in which Hugh sat strangely shaken, not venturing to

reply, he continued, only half-concealing the emotion that possessed him.

"Is it possible that you, so young, so full of promise, have given over your heart to that mad, sorrow-breeding passion, the love of woman?"

The tenderness of his voice stirred the boy's lifelong love. The loneliness of his childhood rushed upon him.

"There has been no other love for me," he said bitterly. "I do not remember my mother; my father, — I do not know why I have had no father's love. Sister Bena says my mother was bright and lovely. He must have wronged her first, and of course he could not care for me; at least, he did not. I have never understood, I have only longed all my life for some one to care for me."

The breaking of his voice warned him, and he was young enough to dread the revelation of his feeling. Brother Laurence had shrunk from his words as if they were blows; even in the moonlight Hugh might have seen him pale and quiver; but he was too occupied with his own emotions to be observant.

After a long silence the schoolmaster spoke.

"The human affections you long for, Brother, multiply sorrows. Those of us who have known them have cast them off as impedimenta in our progress toward the higher things. Satisfy your heart with brotherhood. Yonder is a community of seven hundred sincere, God-serving men and women, each of whom is your brother or sister; yea, your father or

your mother. Had you grown up as I suspect you may have wished, you might have been enticed to degrading associations, to ruinous habits, or you might have undertaken obligations that eat one's youth with cares and bootless griefs. The community is the soil in which all your powers will flourish; in it there will be no eating canker, no temptation to sell your soul for less than the mess of pottage."

Hugh rose, and together they crossed the pasture, he regretting his impulse to confide in one who, after all, was only a Rappite, with a heart dry and empty. And yet, when they were on the path to the village he himself resumed their intimate talk.

"Brother, you said a while ago that you would save me from the love of woman. How can a thing which comes by nature and not by will be so evil?" he asked. Brother Laurence answered:

"You have been taught the Rappite doctrine concerning those things. In the beginning man was both male and female, a complete being containing a dual nature. The angels are still so; Christ Jesus was created so. Man, for some inscrutable reason, was not permitted to remain in that state of perfection. God divided the one from the other, setting the female nature in one body and the male in another."

"But, Brother," Hugh interrupted, "is it not then natural that each should be attracted by the other, and that both should long to be reunited? Is this love not the instinctive longing for complete being?"

"That is a sophistry which rises very easily upon the surface of the mind. It occurred even to Plato, who perceived this same truth of the original dual nature of man. He attributed the restlessness of human nature to the eternal search of each half-being for its complement. Plato was only a heathen, with a heathen's absorption in the things of the body. He did not reflect that only a carnal union is possible to these separated beings, and that it is the nature of such an union to divide the spiritual parts the more hopelessly."

"How can that be, Brother," Hugh questioned, "when any one may see that woman received the more beautiful part of the dual body? Who can say that she has not also the finer spirit?"

Brother Laurence stopped short. "Alas for you!" he said wearily, "that, too, is a sophistry. It is a snare as well, from which you will need to guard yourself."

Hugh flushed and was tempted to say no more; still he was not satisfied.

"It has always seemed to me," he continued boldly, "that the community might have done as well, and the members have been happier, had marriage not been abolished. The care of wife and children seems a manly employment, and not at war with higher things."

"You are wrong there; marriage is the stronghold of individualism; it is the inalienable nature of man

to amass, to struggle for the advantage on behalf of wife and children. Nor can one with such ties know true brotherhood; his affections are shut up in his own. Moreover, the imminent Coming of Christ requires that every man should be free to attend only to spiritual things.

"There is another doctrine of which you have not heard, because it is reserved for those who are mature in thought and experience. This life is but a dream, an 'insubstantial pageant,' a projection from the carnal mind, which obscures the vision and deflects the power of the spirit. Marriage and propagation prolong this dream and hold the race enchained to a continuing evil. When the generations end, this dark dream shall melt away and man shall be redeemed and perfected."

Brother Laurence's pale face was lighted with the enthusiasm of the mystic; his deep voice swelled upon the silence of the night, and he had drawn his gaunt figure up to its unusual height. They were on a little rise just above the village. The scent of locust blossoms wafted from the shade trees was anesthetic. The village was but a mass of huddling shadows picked out with glimmering lights. Hugh felt as if it were indeed but a dream, and all the emotions of that night seemed faint and pointless as the feeling generated by dream experiences. Why had he cared or questioned? What did the things that had moved him matter? Life was peaceful at Harmonie,

men happy enough in its conditions, and Trillis — At thought of her the dream melted, the world became a reality, life a glorious thing full of action and meaning.

"Brother Laurence," he said briskly, arousing him rather rudely from his reverie, "I think I shall go away from Harmonie." Brother Laurence stopped short to gather the full import of Hugh's words, then threw his arm impulsively across his shoulders.

"Oh, my boy! my boy!" he cried. "Do not, I implore you! Do not go away from me! Do not go away from Harmonie! You do not know the world,— a great wicked ravenous place where all evils go about seeking whom they may devour! And for a young man the cruelest, the most deceitful, lie in wait. You do not know that all over the world, wherever men pause to think of the highest things, they look upon Harmonie as the most desirable dwelling-place upon earth. Here we have triumphantly worked out theories as old as human nature. We are held up to all nations as the example of the ideal state of society,— the perfect state for which the wise and good and unselfish have labored and hoped. You can not know what you are giving up! Would you forfeit all this for the love of a girl? A foolish boy's passion that will not last out its gratification!"

Brother Laurence's voice had become so hoarse and angry, his manner so excited, that Hugh did not venture to answer. They walked on in silence, the school-

master shrinking from the strain of conversation involving such painful emotions and such effort for repression. Presently, however, feeling that he might not have made a deep impression upon Hugh's mind, he asked:

"Have you heard of the letter which arrived to-day from my son, Count Theodor von Korassel?"

"Yes," Hugh answered with lively interest; "it is that he comes to America with one hundred and fifty recruits for the community!"

"It is true. Does not this event convince you that the step you have threatened is a mistaken one? Here is a young man, but a few years older than yourself; of the most brilliant prospects, as those things are rated in the world, who leaves them eagerly to cast in his lot with us. He has tested what the world offers, and he rejects it. Can you not accept his decision for your own? It is unquestionably the one that you, yourself, would make, had you his knowledge and experience. Be content at Harmonie, Brother, and watch your steps lest you fall into a snare."

His voice died wearily upon Hugh's ear, his gaunt figure swayed as if it, too, were exhausted. They were at the gate of the schoolmaster's house, and with a return of his old wistful, childish love, Hugh laid his arm tenderly across Brother Laurence's shoulder. But it was shaken off impatiently, and the older man, without a word, dashed into the house and closed the door.

Hugh stood an instant smarting under the rebuff, then turned homeward, hurt and ashamed.

The half-satisfying interview with Trillis, the inner struggle between the accepted celibate code of Harmonie and his newly-awakened impulses, and, finally, this unlooked-for rupture with the schoolmaster, whom he had always secretly loved — these things sent a darker current into the flood of youthful love that had swept over Hugh's heart.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW MEMBERS

Till each man find his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood.

TENNYSON.

The castle of Rosenthor, where Laurence von Korassel had spent his own dreary youth, and where his son, Theodor, had grown up in the care of an uncle, furnished a cruel and dangerous environment for sensitive and aspiring souls. It was lonely in situation, perched on a bleak rock of north Germany with black and unfriendly mountains towering above it, and a black and violent torrent at its foot. It was exposed to fierce and frequent blasts, wrapped in bitter fogs, and piled deep with the snows of long and cruel winters. Even the ardent summers, of a fleeting brilliancy and beauty which nature denies to warmer climes, served only to accent her harshness and to nurse the sense of the relentless and hurrying doom of all bright and happy things.

The scanty population which the bitter soil supported was widely scattered. Even the ancient retainers of the castle of Rosenthor were permeated with the melancholy and hopelessness of the climate.

The uncle, in whose care Laurence had left his child, was a stolid, sensual, unintellectual man, seeking his pleasures in things from which the boy's fine nature shrank. He grew up in these surroundings, melancholy also, and with his father's dreamy and unworldly character. There lay deep within him that which should make him quick to perceive, and mad to follow the ideal good — the elusive light that shines before the souls of those from whom heroes, reformers, and martyrs are chosen.

Theodor idealized his father. The handsome, gloomy, charming man, who came so infrequently to Rosenthor, and made such an atmosphere of grace and refinement, even there, was like a god to his adoring son. When he came no more the young heart remained faithful, and through all the years of youth and early manhood, Theodor secretly nursed the purpose of going into the world to seek him.

When the death of his guardians set him free, he left Rosenthor and set out upon his search. At Würtemberg, he learned of his father's connection with the Rappites and his emigration to America. There Theodor fell in with Harmonists, who, from various reasons, had remained in Germany, and his receptive soul caught fire from the same sparks that had kindled his father's. Letters describing the material prosperity of Harmonie, the peaceful Arcadian life, the spiritual fervors, and the brotherly love that was standing the test of practice so well, were in constant

circulation. To Theodor they described the very world of his dreams, and he decided without hesitation to seek his father in America, and to remain with him for the future in that companionship of which he had had such scant, but satisfying, experiences in childhood. Finding many others eager to join the community in Indiana, he organized a party of recruits, and, constituting himself the leader and assuming the expense of the journey, he crossed the sea with them for America.

The happiest day that ever had dawned for the Harmonists was the day when Count Theodor von Korassel, with his followers, arrived at Harmonie. It was early autumn. The Rappites had looked forward to it since the early spring, and, now that it was come, Nature seemed to blend all the beauties of all the seasons for its adornment. It had the freshness and the promise of spring, the fullness and the brilliancy of summer, the satisfying richness of autumn, and there was not lacking in its crisp morning and evening temperatures the invigorating qualities of winter.

The Wabash Valley showed its loveliest aspect. The sky above was a speckless dome of pellucid blue; the hills were softened by the first faint smokiness of Indian summer. The low pastures were freshly green from recent rains, but the orchards and the upland fields hinted the ripeness of the season in splotches of harmonious gold. Along the edges of

the wood the blue-gums flaunted boughs that glowed like banners of crimson bloom; and the sweet-gums had branches of wine color, dull pink, and yellow, that were like giant orchids. Asters and golden-rod, primroses that should have closed to the sun but kept open to the breeze, traveler's joy, convolvulus, ageratum, blue lobelia, and cardinal-flower bordered the roadsides and gemmed the fields.

In the village the gardens were filled with a riot of bloom; the white division fences were banked with asters, and dahlias, and flaming sage, and every window-sill was full of blossoming plants. To the birds flying over it, Harmonie must have seemed a vast garden, sacred to blooms and seeding growths. And no unimportant element of such a view was the grapevines trained around the houses between the first and second-story windows to form a girdle of verdure. They were somewhat faded now by August heats, and, exhausted with fruiting, were mellowed in places to a pale gold, against which the purple clusters, left for the guests, shone richly.

Count Theodor's followers were from the same districts of Germany as the original communists, and their coming meant, not only additional strength and wealth to the community, but news of home and the revival of old friendships. It was not known at what moment they might be expected to appear on the river in the boats that had been sent into the Ohio to meet them, nor when the wagons would arrive with

those who, tired of the long boat trip from Pittsburg, preferred to finish the journey by land. The village had been agog since daybreak with the final preparations, and, while the gray dawn still lingered in the west, Hugh rode forth to meet and escort them to Harmonie.

Meanwhile, Brother Hanno lay in his room at Number Two, shamming illness. He was jealous of the new-comers, and full of spleen at all this preparation for them.

"No," he said, "this time I will lie while others labor. I have served my day with these Rappites. Why should I be buzzing about like a bee in a bottle to make ready for more thickheads? Let them go on without the band! Lost swine are blooded, and one knows not the worth of the best things until they are withheld. This morning they may go silent, or blow the west wind out of the east, for me! I am not so well, anyway. Sister Drusia makes her little cakes too rich, and scatters her anise seed thick as wheat to fowls. There will be sisters who will ask their souls, 'Where is Brother Hanno, now, in his uniform of band-master that is a glory to all of us?' But they must bear it; and Father Rapp may grumble and learn that he who spits against the wind fouls his own beard. Here I lie, and they may go on as they can without me."

But no one had leisure to think of the recalcitrant brother, and at ten o'clock he came out of his self-

imposed exile to find the whole village in the Sabbath quiet of perfect readiness. He met no one in the freshly-swept streets, no one looked out of the shining windows, everybody being engaged in donning Sunday clothes in honor of the guests who might arrive at any moment.

The doors of all the workshops stood open and the machines and tools, glittering with much rubbing, and adorned with flowers wherever a vase or bowl might be set, showed that even they had been made ready for holiday. The music-stand, upon its island in a tiny artificial lake, was hung with garlands, and, being Brother Hanno's personal domain as leader of the band, it seemed to reproach him for leaving its decoration to others.

"Herr Brimstone!" he said disgustedly. "But Band-master Tauffé has once again shaved his nose to spite his chin! There is not so much going on in this German nunnery, that one should miss any of it!"

Sister Barbara and her assistants at the bake-house, having been seized, at the last moment, with the true housewifely fear of having prepared too little, were concocting additional dainties with all possible haste. Brother Hanno, lured by delicate odors, climbed the fence, and was furtively approaching the bake-house when Sister Brunhild came hurriedly out to the Dutch oven in the yard, and, opening the door, liberated the perfume of apple tarts sprinkled with nutmeg. At sight of her, he fell instantly into the at-

titude of a feeble old man, leaning tremblingly upon his stick, and his lean, leathery features put on a drawn expression and an actual pallor.

Now, Sister Brunhild was just such a plump, rosy, soft-hearted creature as Brother Hanno wished all women to be. He described her as " stirring and persuadable," which covered the two qualities of usefulness and slavishness that he required in his ideal. To-day she had been called from an unfinished toilet, and wore a cotton skirt and an unbleached linen short gown — mere defenses of her best underwear and ruffled petticoats from accidents of the kitchen. Her pale blond hair, most carefully brushed and pomaded, lay smooth and glossy as silk about her fresh cheeks, awaiting the high starched cap that would be donned before the arrival of the guests. Being the daughter of a burgher of south Germany, she had some ornaments,— a tortoise-shell comb inlaid with silver and set with amethysts, a great brooch of smoky topaz in a rim of gold, and an ancient necklace of chased gold beads, with a little locket set with small grayish brilliants. It contained a lock of white hair from the head of a stalwart young cousin, who had significantly pressed her hand on the day of her confirmation, and who had died soon after of fever. When she put on the brooch and the comb she felt culpably worldly; but the sorrowful association of the necklace and the locket seemed to bring down her mounting frivolity and restore the balance of her conscience.

When she looked around and discovered Brother Hanno, she was instantly conscious of the comb. He drew back with a perfect imitation of surprised admiration, and exclaimed:

"If Sister Hilda isn't a woman for you now!"

She blushed, and her plump hand found the locket buttoned inside her short gown, and clung to it as a defense against the old rascal's insinuating flatteries, of which she had had former experiences. Brother Hanno knew the sex, and, changing instantly to the rôle that oftenest wins, appealed to her sympathy.

"An old man who is sick and worn out in the service of his country finds himself much in the way at times like this. He is as little regarded as a leaky cup. Such an one should know enough to die and take himself out of the way, where none can flout him," he said plaintively.

"But you are not so old, Brother," replied Sister Brunhild in her soothing tones. "Not for many days to come should you talk like that. To-day is not always; to-morrow they will listen to your band."

"No, Sister. You would comfort me, but my day is past. I must be meek henceforth, and leave the young men to strut in the sunshine. Not but I've been as gay as the best in my time. *Dieu!* but I wish I might commence again! I've seen the world, Sister Brunhild, but there are few women in it so fine as you are this morning."

She turned quickly to the oven, but even the back of her neck was crimson with her blushes.

Brother Hanno, though he was an old man and could assume the appearance of one much older when he chose, had the eye of immortal youth. It was of an even, unclouded blue, like a turquoise, and it was surrounded by a network of fine wrinkles, the paths of habitual smiles. It flashed now with mischief, and the sudden straightening of the figure that had appeared so senile, testified to a fair survival of youthful vigor.

It was plain, too, by the light in the eyes fixed upon Sister Brunhild's stooping figure, that there was much inflammable material yet left in his heart from the innumerable conflagrations of an ungoverned life. Perhaps the word is too strong. Brother Hanno's fires had been but bright and sudden blazes, making much light and plenty of noise, but seldom proving hot or very destructive.

This plump and wholesome Rappite nun, with the shadows of the pear-leaves dappling her strong shoulders, and the sun shining between them on her smooth, blond hair, ignited his idle old heart in a moment; and when she met his dangerous blue eyes again, she read something in them that startled her.

"O Brother!" she gasped, and shrank backward like a frightened child.

He smiled at her, and answered feelingly:

"A man can't keep his bees from wandering, can

he? Nor his heart, Sister. They say there are two things that can not be hid; the one is a cough, the other ——— "

"Oh, speak not so, Brother!" she pleaded, looking wistfully along the path to the bake-house, yet not daring to pass him in order to reach it.

Brother Hanno had the art to attack her on another side.

"A man is likely to say anything when he is not well and has had no breakfast," he said, veiling the too-ardent eyes.

Now nature had fashioned Brunhild for her own paramount purpose — motherhood; but fate had interfered and fixed her here, a sweet old virgin in a celibate community. The instincts of motherhood were strong in her. She was tormented with the desire to cheer with flagons and to comfort with apples; to pet and to cosset some dependent creature. Even a hungry old man could gratify this longing, and though the innocent old spinster did not exactly despise his flatteries, she preferred his appeals. Now she was all eager pity.

"A breakfast you shall have, Brother; and now! Come with me."

"Why go anywhere for it? A tart will answer, for it is little appetite I carry with me in these days."

She drew forth a pie of the proper shade of brown.

"The crust is far too rich, Sister," he said, turning away with pretended querulousness.

"I will get you a fresh egg. It will be more wholesome," she suggested humbly.

"No, 'beggars should not be choosers,' said the buzzard to the fox who took her for a goose. Your kindness spreads a feast for me, Sister."

When he had cut the pie with his pocket knife, and cooled it by blowing upon it, he looked again at her comely face, and, reading her simple goodness and sweetness in it, really thought her, for the moment, the woman for whom his heart hungered.

"Brunhild," he said tenderly, "you are the best woman in the world, and I am not so old, nor so worn, but a little happiness might build me up again. You know not what love is like, I suppose, my dear, but I——"

"Brother," she cried, clutching the locket and relying upon the memories it evoked for the courage to defend herself, "talk no more to me. You are no true Rappite." And suddenly she darted past him, and sped down the path to the bake-house. He looked after with mingled chagrin and amusement.

"To scare a bird is not the way to catch it, Bandmaster Tauffé. Poor innocent! She thinks no other man in this community has desired her. One knows by his own pot how the others boil. Ah, well! 'Man is fire, woman tow, and the devil blows.' But one should be careful," he admonished himself, when prudence was getting the better of feeling. "'He pays dear for honey who licks it from thorns'; and

Father Rapp will have no traitors to his will. He is like the Little Emperor in that, and one loves the strong hand, after all. 'If you would live at Rome, take care you do not quarrel with the Pope,' they said in my country, and no doubt they had reason. I will go softly with Sister Brunhild hereafter. Yet she was not altogether angry. 'Between a woman's "yes" and "no" there is not room for the point of a needle.' Well, it is lame going upon one leg, and that is the state of the man who has not found the woman to pair with him."

He sighed as he closed the gate and took his way to the river. Skirting the crowd waiting there he found a little group of young people standing somewhat apart, and making merry in a decorous way. They were Otho Rapp and Great Peter, little Yetta Schindler, Elsie Barwé, and Trillis. The unwonted excitement stirred them all, and they talked with low laughter and youthful levity. Hanno joined them, feeling himself no less young and light-hearted, now that his indigestion and revolt had gone away together.

Presently the jubilant notes of a horn announced the approach of the wagons. More than fifty of the elders of Count Theodor's party were seated in them, and, forgetting their weariness, they sang hymns of thanksgiving as they entered this promised land, which was even fairer than they had dreamed.

Hugh rode at the head of the procession, a beauti-

ful presentation of youth in a moment of excitement and triumph. His ugly Rappite coat was folded across the saddle, and his strong young chest and shoulders were covered with a shirt of dazzling white linen. As he dashed down the street, the breeze filling the loose folds and the sleeves, his young figure seemed to dilate and rise with the motion of flying. His brow was uplifted, and the bright brown waves of his hair floated backward, while he waved his huge straw hat high above his head. It was a picture to stir any feminine heart, with its suggestion of strength and activities exclusively masculine, and it impressed itself upon Trillis so deeply that neither time nor sorrow faded it or made it difficult to recall in the years that were to come.

The boats containing Count Theodor and the remainder of his party arrived early in the afternoon.

The entire community awaited them at the landing. Brother Laurence stood beside Father Rapp, his worn face shining with happiness. Count Theodor ran to him with outstretched arms, and threw himself upon his bosom, with an assurance of welcome that made Hugh flush and look away. Some strange, new emotion of anger and pain seized him. Had he not loved this man as warmly as any son, and what return had he but rebuff and heartache?

Count Theodor was a slight young fellow, elegantly built, with a refined face, rather too delicately featured, but handsome and alluring. He was quick,

and graceful, and carried himself with unobtrusive consciousness of birth and breeding. To Hugh, standing at the edge of the crowd, the fine worldly attire and the air of sophistication were a personal affront, a reflection upon his own great body, his ugly Rappite clothes, and ignorance of the world and its fashions.

He could see Trillis, the center of a group of young men and women, her face aglow, her graceful body all alive with pleasant excitement, her inheritance of gracious and charming manner developing with the occasion. He saw Brother Laurence present his son to her, and thought he discerned, even at that distance, her admiration of the hatefully-elegant figure and the polished, worldly address.

"The fellow is no better than a weakling!" he thought. "I could break every bone in his puny body with my hands."

The blood mounted to his brow, a sudden sense of power swept through him; his hands curled themselves into fists, and the muscles of his arms and back grew tense. The soul of the Rappite boy grew fast that day. It was one that must ever grow by leaps and bounds. No careful thinking out of the problems of life, no precept or example could nourish it; it would be fed only by emotions, warm and vital. Love, jealousy, the sense of power, the desire of place and consequence,— all seemed to come together into Hugh's heart, until this moment igno-

rant and careless and confident. Father Rapp called him, and he went forward to be presented to Count Theodor von Korassel. For a few moments the four made a little group apart. Father Rapp, more than six feet in height; Brother Laurence as tall, but hollow-chested, stooping, and yet of a distinguished personality; his elegant young son; and Hugh, both light and strong, as handsome, the adoring Rappite sisters thought, as Tannhäuser, or Balder the Good.

George Rapp, who had conquered most of his human weaknesses, had overlooked a few inconspicuous ones, and throughout his career was liable to yield to them at unexpected moments. Now, when Laurence von Korassel stood between the two young men, plainly showing love and pride for but one, he was seized with jealousy on Hugh's account. On the impulse of the feeling he pushed past Brother Laurence and, drawing the others together, side by side, he said:

"These are the future props of Harmonie, Brother; where will you find me two to match them?"

Brother Laurence looked upon the notable pair with a beaming smile; but suddenly the light went out of his face, and he turned away his head. Father Rapp put his arm across Hugh's shoulder and drew him close with a gesture of deep affection; then, turning to the count, he said, so that all might hear:

"This is the beloved son of the community, from whose gifts we expect great things for Harmonie."

Hugh's heart swelled with joy. Praise from Father Rapp, who was the highest authority in his life, open and generous praise which all his world had heard and would value as he did, overwhelmed him with the sweetest emotion of that day. All that was small and evil melted before it, and his nature rose to meet it, resolved to prove its claim.

The happy day sped to its close. In the soft early twilight the great bell, which could be heard at the outlying farms four miles away, rang for the evening service in the great church. This building was erected, it is said, from a plan given to George Rapp in a dream. It was in the form of a Greek cross, and built of brick and stone. The beams of the roof were of hand-polished oak, and it was supported upon enormous pillars of walnut, and an equal number, somewhat smaller, of sassafras. The Harmonists had chosen for these pillars the largest and straightest trees in the magnificent forests of the Wabash Valley; when peeled and dressed to bring out color and grain, and set in the vast interior as columns, they produced an effect both unique and beautiful. That night the church was lighted with hundreds of candles, mixed with odorous gums: the carved pulpit was twined with blossoming vines; and, where the yellow candle-light struck upon the polished columns, it brought out subtle, unsuspected colors.

The singers in the dusky choir were dressed in

white; and Father Rapp wore a gown of grayish silk, the robe of state, which he could seldom be persuaded to put on. Its long lines and voluminous folds suited his majestic figure and harmonized with the vast dim church and his priestly office.

The service was impressively simple; and such was the enthusiasm aroused in the minds of Count Theodor and his followers that, ere it had ended, they asked immediate admission to the community. They accordingly signed the Rappite agreement, which bound them to hold their goods in common, to labor for the general good, to remain celibate, and to cherish the spirit of brotherhood.

In this first service, which was the last they were ever to hold in perfect accord, the new members and the old had conclusive proof of George Rapp's power as a preacher. When it was ended his eloquence seemed still to enthrall them. To Count Theodor the experience was exciting and significant; never had he heard such oratory, never had he so gladly submitted his spirit to the domination of another. He left the church in ecstasy. The little village of Harmonie, lying tranquil in the soft, September night, had for him a celestial beauty; he looked forward to the future in it as the realization of all his dreams of happiness and all his aspiration for higher things.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE REVELATION

And all her senses seemed to watch and wait
For something that would touch and stir them all,
And something, lifeless yet, to being call;
She wished it come, yet, timid, feared her fate.

And ere she knew the name of Love, one day,
All flushed her cheek and tear-bedewed her eyes,
He kissed her lips. With tender sweet surprise
The woman lived — the child had passed away.

STEPHEN DECATUR SMITH.

An hour after the close of the service at the church, the band began to play old German airs, and the elder Rappites seated themselves on benches around the margin of the little lake, and talked or listened in pleasant companionship. The young people, in spite of the wearying journey of their guests and the long day's labor of the hosts, strolled restlessly about, or, forming congenial parties, played games upon the grass or in the wide streets.

Sister Martha, who had gone to her room for wraps, fearing all sorts of ills from the soft night airs, came upon a merry group at play behind the church. They were youths and maidens and some older persons of Count Theodor's party. Among

them a Rappite coat flapped merrily in the chase of a laughing girl. Martha planted her solid figure in front of this couple, and brought them to a stand-still in the open moonlight.

"Brother!" she said in a voice of ponderous disapproval. "And is it you, Brother Hanno?"

"Why, no!" the band-master airily replied. "It is Father Rapp. You are so carried away with all this merrymaking that your eyes deceive you. You should curb your spirit to a more seemly moderation."

Sister Martha's sigh was anger, insult, and superior and forgiving virtue, all in one sound.

"Shame be to you, Brother, for that lie!" she said in her deep tones, while she fixed him with handsome, scornful eyes.

"What would you? The oldest horse, when he is in pasture, tries to fling his heels with the colts. The ferment in wine and men carries off the dregs. One must be young until he is old, Sister."

"Young? When your head is white, and your years plain to be counted! To-morrow you will ache from head to foot for this."

It is not desirable to be reminded of one's age in the presence of laughing youth, and Hanno winced.

"A woman in love and an aching tooth take all a man's attention," he remarked to the maiden. "This is only a little flight in the sun, Sister," he said soothingly to Martha. "I'll be homing soon

enough." Brother Hanno could be impudent as anyone on occasion.

She was quick to catch his suggestion; and, her brown eyes flashing with rage, she took a step toward Hanno and actually lifted her hand. But, remembering the teaching of her sect, she recovered herself and turned away. Anger and pride gave her a new majesty of carriage, and Hanno, looking after her, said appreciatively:

"Temper in a woman is like the spirit in wine. However, men may lose their heads from either, as John the Baptist learned one day. But one likes sweet and gentle girls better than wine or angry old women," he added, smiling into his companion's eyes.

"Rappites should not pay compliments," she said with a roguish glance that tempted him to come nearer.

"'Compliments are the small change of love,' they say, and I have done much trading in that mart. Ah, I know the meaning of girls' glances! And I have as supple a curve to my arm as any lad of twenty, if you will but test it."

"Brother!" a sharp voice cut in upon his sentimental tones, "I have brought you a comforter for your throat; night air is bad for one of your years."

Sister Martha had returned with a clumsy, knitted scarf, which the maiden, with over-solicitous face and mischievous eyes, wrapped around Hanno's neck.

"You have my thanks," he said humbly; "but, as

the fly said to the cook who rolled him in the dumpling, one may have enough of sweets."

In another part of the village, nearer the labyrinth, a number of young people were playing games. Great Peter, being both too shy and too clumsy to chase the laughing girls, sat on a bench, and played a soft accompaniment to their frolic upon his fiddle. Otho Rapp, with tumbled curls and cheeks as rosy as a child's, came suddenly into possession of hitherto unsuspected lightness and grace. The stranger maidens looked admiringly upon his great body and handsome face, and did not hesitate to put themselves in his way; but he too often singled out the tiny Rappite girl who was so quiet, and yet so sure of herself, and whom they heard him address with the deepest respect as "Sister Yetta."

Hugh was also indulging a healthy appetite for pleasure. The festal influence in the air, the invigorating tang in the night breeze, the remembrance of Father Rapp's warm praise, and the presence of so many strangers, were all as wine to his young spirit.

Among the new-comers were three or four maidens, light-hearted and comely. The tall Rappite, with his ready wit and laughter, his radiant youth and conscious power, attracted them. Accustomed to the free association of German village life, they innocently betrayed themselves by a variety of attentions that were utterly foreign to the serious behavior expected of the young men and women of Harmonie.

They were far from objectionable to Hugh, who found that to be courted by a bright-eyed girl straight from the mysterious and delightful world was a charming experience. To be " chosen " in the games, chased and singled out by three of them in a laughing rivalry, amounted almost to intoxication. The most persistent was Ulrica, a tiny, dainty, languishing creature, unlike any woman Hugh had ever known.

" Oh," she sighed, when he had caught her in a game, " I am so tired! Don't take me back. Be kind, and lead me to some place where we can rest in quiet, or I shall die."

Her voice was low and piteous, and she leaned with her whole weight upon him, swaying now and then as if from weakness. He led her very gently to a little bench under the trees near the green where they were playing.

" Oh, do not stop here. I can go a little farther, if you will help me a little more. I must rest in a quiet place, away from all these people."

At last they found a bench deep in the shade of the pleasure ground, so far that the voices of the others reached them only as a pleasant murmur.

" Sit closer, won't you? It is so chilly," she said, shivering and creeping nearer Hugh. Her ribbons and her fine blond hair blew upward against his cheek and chin; he stiffened and drew back; then, reflecting upon the childishness of the little creature,

and afraid of betraying his ignorance of the ways of the world, he bent over her kindly.

"Will you take my coat?" he asked.

"O yes, just a part of it," replied Ulrica. "It is not pretty, but being so long and so wide it will wrap us both, if you will sit closer. There! Is not that lovely?"

Hugh was not sure that it was; still ——

"Why don't you talk?" she asked petulantly.

"What shall I talk about?"

"Oh, I wish I were not such a feeble little creature! You like girls that are brave and tall; you know that I am the very worst little coward! I should be frightened to death here, if I were not with you. You are so big and strong and brave! But you hate me!" Her plaintive tones were threaded with sobs. How little and helpless she was! He must reassure her.

"I do not hate you," he urged. "Why should I?"

"You — you have never said you liked me, or liked my looks — or anything! You don't care how cold I am! And I am getting afraid, it is so dark here. Oh, what shall I do!"

The greater the man's physical strength the stronger the fascination of a little and clinging woman, provided she knows enough to cling at convenient seasons. Ulrica saw no reason why this moment, when they were alone in the dark, with no

preoccupying interests, was not the most convenient possible.

"I can't get warm," she pleaded, "unless you move your arm; pressed into your side in that way it takes up so much room."

"What shall I do with it?" Even as he asked it Hugh anticipated her answer to his question. She laughingly drew it around her waist.

"Why did you not do that long ago?" she asked.

"We Rappites do not do these things," he replied, striving weakly to free himself from the charm that grew upon him.

"Why not? Don't you find it pleasant?" She lifted her face and smiled into his eyes.

Hugh drew back amazed. What was this he saw? Something for which he knew no name, something altogether new to his experience; and yet as old as the world. He chilled with intangible fears, blushed with shame, sickened with disgust; even his innocence had recognized the wanton, and he shrank from her with the instinct of self-preservation. And yet, even as he shrank and chilled, he drew her a little closer. Some traitor within him was unlocking the gate. Ulrica, as if she could read in the darkness the changing emotions in his face, nestled into his clasp, and lay upon his breast, looking up to meet the expected kiss. It was in Hugh's mind; half-eager, half-reluctant, he bent toward her, when the thought of Trillis came to him out of the darkness like a voice.

He drew back, pushing the little clinging body slightly away from him.

At that moment an excited voice cried out, and Trillis stood before them in the moonlight.

Hugh had a vision of himself as she must have seen him with Ulrica in his arms. He pushed the little creature from him, much as if she were a reptile, and plunged into the friendly shadows. Ulrica arose.

"He was cold as a stone — at first," she laughed. "I know that you Rappites do not marry, but I supposed you knew how to love."

"Love?" cried Trillis. "Did you expect him to love such a creature as you are?" And, without waiting for a reply, she left her.

Full of rage and shame, and the sense of having been wronged and robbed, Trillis hurriedly threaded the paths of the labyrinth to the little temple upon the crest of the hill. She dropped down on the steps, and, throwing herself forward upon the porch floor, buried her face in her arms. A strange, new emotion, like a spasm, seized her when she thought of Hugh with that girl in his embrace. In that tumultuous moment, when love and jealousy had sharpened her faculties, she had learned the existence of unsuspected things in the world; vague, brutal things that had yet a disturbing beauty and attraction. Bewildered, she questioned whether they were only base emotions masquerading as love, or a dark and secret side of love's own nature. The sound of Hugh's step

TRILLIS STOOD BEFORE THIM IN THE MOONLIGHT *Page 168*

upon the gravel aroused her, and she sprang up to face him angrily.

"Why did you follow me?" she asked.

"I did not. I only wanted to get away by myself," he answered sullenly.

"I should think you would hate yourself," she cried.

"But you do not understand; you think things were worse than they were. She said she was cold, and she asked me to wrap her in my coat."

"Why did not you take her to the banquet-room, or some place where it is warm, not to the hillside where the wind is fiercest?"

"Trillis, I do not see why you are angry with me," he said humbly.

"Angry? I? Why, I do not care,— only — only for the honor of the community. I think it a great pity that Count Theodor should bring such shameless creatures here."

She tossed her head in dismissal of the subject, and sat down on the step again, propping her chin in her hands, and gazing abstractedly into the shadowed lanes converging at the temple.

"Trillis," said Hugh presently, with a sweet humility, "I — I did not kiss her — quite."

She turned fiercely upon him.

"I should think not! And yet you might have," she ended accusingly.

"If I had, it would have been nothing. I should

have done it only because she wished it; it would not have been anything to me."

Trillis, whom this masculine argument puzzled exceedingly, turned it aside with a toss of her head.

"What do you know of kisses? You, a Rappite?" she asked.

Hugh grew warm with the scorn of her tone, and yet, being of good virile stuff, he loved her the more for her fine flashing anger. With her small head lifted, her eyes glowing in the darkness, her voice clear as some high-keyed bell, she was a creature to propitiate. He bent toward her and softly answered:

"I know more of kissing than you think, perhaps."

At his tone her heart leaped, and a strange, expectant joy swept over her. It was only with the pretense of rallying pride that she asked:

"How can that be?"

Hugh drew a little nearer. Since his experience with Ulrica, femininity was not so formidable; not that he thought of her — all femininity at this moment was represented by Trillis. Already he was back again in that blissful land they had visited together on the night of the tryst by the river; and his whole heart was set upon leading her there beside him in that unity of spirit which had been theirs before. Trillis, too, had forgotten Ulrica. Hugh's manner, rather than his words, had awakened a prophetic joy in her heart; she hung breathless upon what was to

follow. His voice had found the sweetest tone in its register when he went on:

"I kissed a girl once — in a dream." It seemed an age of hovering delights before he added:

"It was you, Trillis!"

"I think —" she whispered, "I think I almost felt it."

His arm closed around her.

"It was like this," he said; and their lips met.

"Trillis, dear Trillis, do you love me?"

"Yes, Hugh, dear Hugh!"

Down in the village the doors of the banquet-hall were thrown open, and the guests, escorted by Father Rapp and the elders of the community, were taking their places at the bountifully-spread tables. The main floor of the granary had been chosen for the festival, and served the purpose well. It was lighted by many perforated tin lanterns and hundreds of perfumed candles. The rafters and beams were hung with garlands, and the long white tables were profusely decorated with flowers. Brother Hanno and Otho Rapp with violins, Great Peter with his bass viol, Brother Martin and Brother Jung Scheller with their horns, sat upon a platform at the end of the hall, and made merry music to time the feasting. The white-capped, white-aproned sisters served the guests quietly and with perfect system. Sister Bena, serene and dignified as any great lady, sat at the head of the long table, and, while she entertained her guests with

a charming natural courtesy and tact, neglected not to note every movement of the serving sisters, and to direct them unperceived by others.

Father Rapp, at the other end, was in his happiest vein, tactful, considerate, witty, and unaffectedly happy. Eager as he was to please the guests, he was also minded to make acknowledgment of the labors of those who had provided for them.

"Brother Lucian," he called, "stand thou up that our new brethren may see thee."

A little, round, bald-pated old man, his childish face aflame with blushes, arose in his place and stood, bowing excitedly.

"This," Father Rapp continued, "is the brother who roasts the meats. No one can equal him at preparing, at seasoning, or basting. You have our thanks, Brother."

One by one he called the names of the sisters who had baked the bread and the pastry, those who had made the conserves and the sweetmeats, those who mixed the salads or dressed the vegetables, and praised them. The recipients of his kindness glowed and tingled, and so loved their generous leader that they did not count their toil, now that it had won his approval.

What with the hearty German appetites, the merriment, the pressing hospitality of the hosts, the delicious viands and their astonishing variety, the banquet lasted far into the night.

Hugh and Trillis on the temple porch forgot it, being occupied with far more engrossing things. Nature had long been making them ready for this hour, yet when it came its ecstasy was enhanced by the element of surprise.

"How soft your cheek is!" the young lover sighed tenderly, following the oval of her face with his finger-tips.

"But yours is not so soft," she laughed, and touched it swiftly. "It sticks!"

"And your hands are so small and fine! I think there is nothing so beautiful in all the world as you are, Trillis."

"Oh!" she whispered ecstatically. "O Hugh! How can you think that?"

"It is because you are a woman, Trillis; and you are the woman who was made for me — I feel it. Long ago, in the beginning of things, we were one. Think of it! And that is why we have felt this strange unhappiness. Each of us has missed the other, and been seeking and longing. Is it not sweet to have found each other?"

"That is true," she whispered, and their lips met again in a common impulse to realize their union.

"I did not know exactly, just at first, and I was so restless and unhappy; and you were like that, too, Hugh. When did you find out that — that you wanted me?"

"It came to me a great many times. Once

when you moved to the end of your seat in the church, and the sunshine fell on you, and I saw you. I don't know why, but it was as if I had never looked at you before, Trillis. And that day when you were wading in the brook, you and Yetta together, and you did not know that Otho and I were coming; you lifted your head and the birch leaves dappled you all over with little shadows, and I saw your feet, white as snow through the water; but best of all, in the dream, with the kiss. Then I knew I wanted nothing in the world so much as that you should love me!"

Trillis hid her delight in this speech upon his shoulder, and questioned no more. The wonder and the rapture possessed them wholly. They no longer heard the voices of the merrymakers in the village, nor knew that the moon had gone down and the stars were paling in the sky. The sweet miracle of loving still held them in its spell, when the voice of the night watchman, making his last round before the dawn, floated up to them:

"*A day is past, and a step made nearer our end: our time runs away, and the joys of heaven are our reward.*"

The lovers started apart, conscience-stricken; then, without a word, they separated, and, taking diverging paths, sped wildly down the hill and out of the labyrinth, as if an angel with a flaming sword had driven them forth.

## CHAPTER XII

### HARMONIE

Then shall a man work and bethink him, and rejoice in the deeds of his hand,
Nor yet come in the even too faint and weary to stand.
* * * * *
Then all *mine* and *thine* shall be *ours*, and no more shall any man crave
For riches that serve for nothing but to fetter a friend for a slave.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

When Trillis had reached her own room, the surging of excited currents in her veins made sleep impossible. She lay staring at the broadening day reflected upon the bare white walls of her chamber, abandoning herself wholly to the conflict of feeling. Now she was back again upon the steps of the temple porch, and heard Hugh's declarations and felt his kisses; and now she was sailing swiftly into the strange, sweet future.

But while pictures of it all, scintillating with bliss, were floating before her, the sudden memory of the watchman's cry dissolved them, and left her trembling with undefined fears. What was it that had befallen her? She knew intuitively that it was of stupendous moment; her life was changed. She her-

self had become a new being, and the Trillis Daventry of yesterday a mere ghost. She smiled to think of what she had been a few hours ago, and yet, if one is to reckon by experience and growth, it was an age. And from the thought of that incomplete and childish past her mind rushed to the future,— what was it to be? At first it was rose-colored, warm and joyous. Hugh and Hugh's love filled it with light and promise. But Trillis, even in the power of this sweet obsession, was clear-sighted and honest. Looking steadily at this glory she saw shadows beyond it, and her intelligence began to control her emotions. How was this future to keep its promise of companionship? She and Hugh were members of a celibate community. Though all the prohibitory tenets of the Rappites centered upon marriage, she had worldly wisdom enough to divine that the real danger lay in such a relation as had sprung up between them. Yesterday she had innocently indulged her tender thoughts of Hugh, had pondered upon the picture of him in her heart, had dreamed of suffering and sacrificing for his sake, of devoting her life to the secret worship of him, of living contentedly through long years at Harmonie for the chance of ministering to him. But in all her dreams she had missed the thing that had actually occurred.

Love had another aspect now, and she was afraid. The sight of Ulrica in Hugh's arms had instantly destroyed her innocent ignorance, and she shudder-

ingly accepted the hateful wisdom of the revelation. Love had this side then, this hideous, serpent-like nature hidden under its charm. Her virgin soul shrank and rebelled, but her intelligence insisted — this, too, is love, beware! Beware! And she trembled at her own warning.

When all the household was astir and the business of the day begun, Trillis arose and dressed, and went down to her accustomed occupations. She was pale and heavy-eyed, and yet there were moments when her face flushed, her eyes glowed, and her whole person seemed to be suddenly charged with new vitality, because the thought of Hugh and his love lay in wait for her, and too often she yielded to its sweetness.

She saw him more than once that morning, for Father Rapp was conducting Count Theodor and the elders of his party over the estate of Harmonie, and Hugh had been chosen to explain to them the various industries of the community. Once he caught a glimpse of Trillis in the schoolmaster's yard, and sent her a glance that made her blush and tremble. Later, in the weaving-room at the woolen mill, while she led the women in a chorus of welcome, she had felt his gaze upon her, eloquent as many words. He had passed her in the dooryard of Number Four, and, plucking a sprig of lavender, had dropped it at her feet. These incidents teemed with significance to her, being repeated declarations of love that made her more helpless, while at the

same time they proved her helplessness the more clearly.

As for Hugh, the superstitious fear that had seized him at the watchman's cry had evaporated in the healthful sleep falling quickly upon him. Waking, he thought of what had happened with a joyous wonder and an ever-augmenting desire for more of the blissful experience. However, his lifelong passion for mechanics was not to be routed even by love, and he went very willingly from shop to mill explaining the methods of manufacture of the varied products of Harmonie, with enthusiastic pride, little diminished by darting thoughts of Trillis and the sweets of loving.

Count Theodor, being more a dreamer than man of affairs, gave little thought to the prosperity which was so evident, and less to the improved machinery and progressive methods that were characteristic of Harmonie and were one source of its commercial success. His mind was more open to the cheerful content that possessed all the workmen and the brotherly spirit which seemed to knit them all together as in a family.

In the tan-yard they came upon a very old man who sat under a walnut tree scraping a hide with a bit of glass. He whistled a broken tune through his fanged old teeth, and worked his bare feet luxuriously in the warm dark dust spread thickly upon the ground.

"Did you work at this trade in the Old Country?" Count Theodor asked him.

"Ay, and that is a true word," he answered, looking up with a sweet and tranquil smile. "It was work there; here it is a happiness; there it was for bread, scant and bitter; here it is for the Daughter of Zion and my brethren whom she shelters."

A quarter of a mile down the river they visited the great merchant mill of the Rappites, grinding between its six stones all the wheat and corn grown in the surrounding country. To the lusty young brothers and vigorous old ones who worked in it, cheerful alacrity and a genial fellowship seemed as common as the powdering of flour upon their clothing. A little, round, ruddy, bright-eyed old brother, whose blue smock was confined to the barrel of his body by a snowy linen apron, and whose rosy bald head was crowned with the traditional white cap of the German baker, watched the grinding and the sifting with a jealous eye, displaying an ingenuity of criticism which might well have irritated the millers. They met it with indulgent courtesy, and even exchanged smiles of pride at his insistent officiousness.

"And what is thy trade, Brother?" Count Theodor asked.

"'Tis this," was the sententious reply.

"Thou art a miller, like these others?"

"I? No. Milling is but the a b c of my trade. I make men." He paused upon the startling state-

ment, tasting of the astonishment in the faces of the strangers before he added:

"I am the baker, but no journeyman who knows only the part of his trade. I follow the wheat from the grain. I direct the planting, I watch its growth. I oversee the harvesting and the grinding; it escapes not my care until it is safe in my trough at the bake-house. Good men come of good bread, and good bread of good flour, good flour from good wheat, and good wheat only from such care as I bestow upon it."

Similar incidents occurred at other places to show how well George Rapp had succeeded in planting the principles of communism in the minds of his disciples. There were no lagging and listless workers, no sullen faces, no evidence anywhere of enforced and unwelcome toil.

Count Theodor's enthusiastic heart was fired at this corroboration of his dream of social reform, and his approval left a little glow of happiness behind him.

At the woolen mill Hugh was called upon to adjust a new carding machine just arrived from Pittsburg. Count Theodor watched him at his work with speculative pleasure, not admiring the mechanical genius which was the pride of the Harmonists, but pointing out to himself that here was another product of communism more admirable than any of the others,— a handsome youth, clear-sighted and confident, full of untainted virility, unwasted strength, and natural power; a man as Nature would have him,

unstained by the vice of cities, untouched by carking cares and stunting toil.

Hugh's hands were grimy from oil, his clothing and hair were hung with little flecks of lint, his shirt, unbuttoned at the neck, showed the white of his young chest in contrast with the sun-tanned throat and face, but he was indifferent now to his appearance, being upon his own ground and showing himself master there. When the machine was started again, proving his skill, he took his place beside Count Theodor, and talked of the things in which he was interested with a new and serious manliness that delighted the heart of George Rapp, who, listening to the enthusiastic dreams of Count Theodor and the practical plans of Hugh, congratulated himself that Harmonie's future was secure, both on the spiritual and the material side.

That afternoon the mills and shops were closed, and the villagers and their guests went to the apple orchards to make cider. It was one of those late summer days that can be painted only by an opulent pen — with purple, gold, crimson, and violet laid on smoothly and deeply, and an illuminated haze to tone and blend them.

Father Rapp, having been delayed at the Great House, did not arrive until mid-afternoon, when he came by way of the mulberry plantation, loitering for that solitary communion with Nature which tranquilized and nourished his spirit. The large leaves

and low growth of the white mulberry trees shut out the orchard and the village, and inclosed him in a grateful seclusion. There were cares upon his mind, and forebodings, from whose shadow he had all day striven vainly to escape; but here, in this green and fragrant gloom, he found new courage and a clearer insight, and insensibly his heart lightened, and the sounds of innocent pleasure which began to reach him from the orchard chased away his look of care, and brightened his face with a smile of indulgent sympathy. Even at this distance the air was heavy with the odor of sweet cider, and he met bees and wasps buzzing tipsily homeward from their revels at the pomace heaps. These simple pleasures were sweet to him, and added to the contentment that was subduing his perturbed spirit.

A turn in the path brought the breeze from the southeast to his face, and with it a new odor so obnoxious to the leader of the Rappites that all his happy serenity dissolved in an instant. The use of tobacco had been voluntarily abjured by the Harmonists many years before, but here, in the mulberry plantation, the scent of its smoke was borne fresh to his nostrils — an overt defiance of all rules and all authority. With it came also the sound of merry voices and careless laughter.

He strode quickly to the little cabin, used as a hatchery for silkworms, and opened its door upon a gay party of men and boys. Otho Rapp leaned

against the window, his curly head shining in the sun, and beside him lounged Great Peter, his round face suddenly struck stony with a stupid, embarrassed grin upon it. Three or four young strangers, who had come to Harmonie with Count Theodor, were leaning against the shelving, and in the center of the room Brother Hanno perched, like Gambrinus, on a barrel. He, too, was stricken to stone in the act of filling a great gourd from the odorous contents of the barrel. The room was dim with smoke, and there was a simultaneous effort to convey the cob pipes from lips to pockets and dark corners. Otho Rapp took his quietly from his mouth and held it in his hand, with no attempt at concealment. Seeing this, Great Peter recovered his senses enough to move his huge body between Otho and Father Rapp's blazing eyes.

Hanno turned off the spigot, and, with elaborate care, for the liquor of the Harmonie stills was strong, climbed from the barrel, and, approaching Father Rapp, offered the gourd with a grin.

"'Tis for hospitality, Father. 'He who offers his fireside warms my body; he who offers his tankard warms my heart,' as they say in Swabia."

George Rapp's arm shot out, and a shower of good whisky fell with astonishing impartiality upon all the revelers, while the shattered gourd struck only Hanno. Half-sobered by surprise, he wiped his face with the skirt of his Rappite coat and murmured:

"A straight blow is the best argument."

"Well?" said Father Rapp, looking sternly around the circle of shamed faces.

"Excuse our guests, Father, and let those of us who are of Harmonie remain for the reckoning," suggested Otho quietly.

His grandfather flushed and dismissed the strangers with courtesy. But now that he was alone with Hanno, Otho, and Great Peter, he was at a loss how to proceed. The difficulty lay in his attitude toward Otho Rapp. The tie of blood made itself felt only as a restraint; he was conscious of an abyss between himself and his grandson. The lad was handsome and strong, noble-minded and honest; he had a good intellect and a noble sweetness of nature; in short, he was one to win the deepest affections of a grandparent. But he had borne himself from childhood with a certain calm and critical aloofness that chafed and bewildered George Rapp, whose natural affections would otherwise have been hard to confine within the limits set by the tenets of the Harmonists.

Otho had been guilty from time to time of the various faults of normal boyhood, and not even in the most flagrant had the leader of the Rappites been courageous enough to reprimand him in person. But this inexplicable childish escapade had had so many witnesses it seemed impossible to avoid the exercise of his righteous authority. Otho, standing erect in the light of the window, still holding the pipe openly, waited quietly, half divining the thoughts behind the

great corrugated brow and the stern eyes. At this moment Peter blundered to the front, saying eagerly:

"You are not to blame Brother Otho for being here, Father. It was I persuaded him. I thought it was to be only a little laughter and a little wine. It was not until after we had begun that — that some one brought forth pipes. You see, Father, these young men of the world rate us as babies,— they know so much evil. We were loath to hold back and let them taunt us for children."

Father Rapp's face softened as Peter went on; it was one of his gifts to be able to enter wholly into the reasons for conduct without regard to the antagonisms of temperament or beliefs. For the moment he was a Rappite boy ashamed of his innocence in the presence of the sophisticated strangers. He looked at Peter searchingly, and then said:

"And you are satisfied with the pleasure of proving yourselves capable of wickedness?"

"It has not been a pleasure," Peter replied ruefully. "As for me, I have been miserable, miserable. Even before you came I said to myself, 'It would have been easier to stand our ground as faithful Rappites.' I — I — It must be that I am dying, I think!"

He ended with a moan, and his great body collapsed slowly along the wall until it lay huddled upon the floor. Otho put out his hand and slowly lowered himself, like an old man whose joints are painful, or

like a landsman on a rocking deck, until he could bend over his friend.

"Are you sick, Brother? It must be that there is no air. Open — open the door!" he begged with white lips.

Father Rapp helped them both outside the cabin, where they lay stretched upon the turf for nature to reckon with, and then he returned to Hanno.

"Reprobate!" He hurled the word at him with such violence that the old rascal started from a creeping stupor, and shrank as if it were a blow.

"This is your doing!" George Rapp continued. "I would to Heaven that tobacco could poison you again with twice the suffering of those poor lads outside!"

"It was bad enough the first time I ever smoked it. I swore never to touch it more; but, alas! God made men of flesh, Father," he said, with a suggestive sigh.

"What have you to say for yourself in this matter of the brandy?"

"It is of excellent quality, Father, but a little new, as Dummer Hans might have said of the green persimmon I offered him. But he said nothing — poor fool — only ——"

"I am not to be diverted, and my patience is short."

"Like that of the great Little Emperor. He ——"

"You are to answer for the theft of the brandy

and the use of tobacco," interrupted Father Rapp, with blazing eyes.

"The brandy? 'That is a weighty charge, and calls for time,' as Sir Reynard said when the innkeeper demanded pay for the Michaelmas goose. As for the tobacco, who dares accuse Band-master Tauffé of breaking his oath to smoke a pipe? *Saperlot!* but the devil himself has not the courage for that!" he blustered, and began to pace up and down the hatchery.

The draft from the window, striking the pockets of his coat, drew first a little mist of smoke, then the odor of burning wool, and then a fine blaze which reached merrily toward the white beard and the red amazed face of old Hanno, who stood halting between amusement and shame.

"Unless he should borrow it," he added with a laugh that was half a chuckle and half a groan.

George Rapp beat out the fire with his hands. When he had done, Hanno was sober and repentant.

"You see the devil is never far from me, though never before did he hide in my pockets," he said ruefully; then, with a half-childish appeal, added:

"'Tis hard making the silk purse out of such stuff, Father. One has wonder at your patience."

"All of us find the devil too near us at times, Brother, and we need to help one another. As for you, go to Brother Vitus for a season. The devil likes not loneliness, scant fare, and hard work."

Now Brother Vitus, since he would not acknowledge his sin and that of his dead wife in breaking their vow of celibacy, had been sent to an outlying farm, where he lived alone, forbidden to take part in the life of the community. He had assumed the most ascetic way of living, and had become morose and inhumanly silent. Banishment to this laborious and abstemious life was a heavy punishment for Hanno. However, he had learned to turn the pages of experience with a steady hand and open mind, and this one came before the next; moreover, he knew his own weakness.

"'Tis better for the ass to be hobbled than to founder himself," he said, as he watched Father Rapp disappear in the direction of the orchard, and turned sadly into the opposite path which led to exile. An hour later Otho and Great Peter, clinging together in mortal weakness, left the mulberry plantation.

Soon after their departure the door of the cabin was opened again, and Trillis darted inside. She was flushed and panting, and she leaned a long time against the shelves running around the wall of the tiny dim room. She had but just begun to breathe naturally again when Hugh appeared.

"Oh!" she said, withdrawing herself from his clasp. "I did not mean you should do that. That is not why I asked you to come here."

He laughed, and, catching the hand she had spread against his chest to hold him away, he pressed it to his cheek.

"Why should it not be for this?" he asked teasingly. "I don't deny that it is what I came for. Do you think we can go back to yesterday when I had never kissed you?"

His happy, masculine assurance, his evident freedom from any of the cares and questions of their new relations, weakened her purpose for an instant, and it was very timidly that she ventured:

"Do you think it is right, Hugh? Is it right?"

"Right? Why, we can't help it! We were made for each other, and we have found it out. Don't sadden our meeting by questions that are not to be answered, sweetheart."

He was but half-serious, and she divined that he was more occupied with caressing the hand he still held than with her problems.

"But I must say what I came to say. I did not sleep at all; I only lay and thought and thought. It is not right, Hugh; we must not love each other," she insisted.

"Can you help it?" he asked, dropping her hand and looking suddenly stern and offended.

"Oh, no! I can not!" she cried in pain.

Why could he not understand? Why did he not see how deeply she felt what she was trying to say? He smiled again instantly, and when he put his arm about her she dared not hurt him by resisting the caress.

"There is nothing more to say, dear one. You

love me, I love you; let us, then, be happy," he murmured.

"Can you be happy, if you think it wrong?" she asked, after a pause.

"But I will not think it wrong," he replied.

She gave up the struggle for a moment, and found herself drifting with him on the current of feeling. She grasped at her resolution, and drew herself back to her purpose.

"Hugh, I came here to say that I will not go on like this, because it is forbidden."

"It is marriage that is forbidden," he interrupted carelessly.

"But this — this way of loving — Oh, I do not know how to say it, but you know as well as I that this is the very thing that is most dangerous to Rappite institutions."

"Nobody knows that we love each other. You are troubled without reason, Trillis. Why can we not meet now and then, and be happy together? It could harm no one."

He had taken her hand again, and she was weakly yielding to his argument. It was true that only they, really only she, could suffer from their happiness; but could she bear secrecy, deceit, dishonor? Not even for Hugh. She was very white when she spoke, and her voice trembled, but Hugh felt the finality of her words.

"I can not argue, I can not make you understand,

but I will not meet you secretly, I will not let you kiss me, or — or talk of love any more."

"Why?" he asked querulously, persisting, in spite of his conviction that she was not to be moved.

"Because — because — O, Hugh, don't you guess? I love you, and I am afraid!" she cried, and shrank back against the shelves.

"Afraid? You do not trust me, Trillis, when I would die rather than harm you."

"I know — I know!" she cried. "O, Hugh, come back! I do trust you!" But she was alone.

It was nightfall when she returned to the island, her rich color quenched, and with a strange, premature womanliness of bearing. For several days thereafter she avoided Hugh; then, finding that he himself was quite as determined they should not meet, she gradually resumed her old habits of life, passing him upon the village streets, meeting him at church or in the shops, and schooling herself to bear without a sign the terrible pang of his averted look, or the sudden, angry flash of his eye when it met her own.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DISCORD

Nor will that day dawn at a human nod,
When, bursting through the net-work superposed,
By selfish occupation — plot and plan,

Lust, avarice, envy — liberated man,
All difference with his fellow mortal closed,
Shall be left standing face to face with God.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Count Theodor and his comrades had signed the Rappite agreement in all sincerity. The village and the valley in which it nestled were so beautiful, the life that the Harmonists led there appeared so idyllic, that they were blind to the labor and self-sacrifice underlying it. Almost immediately these ignored factors arose to confront and confound them. Gay and ambitious students and frivolous girls were assigned tasks of which they knew nothing more than that they were menial and difficult. Nor did labor appeal more gratefully to the elders, who were quite as unaccustomed and averse to it.

A peaceful life involves more or less of monotony; the very restlessness of spirit that had tempted these people to leave Germany and their conventional life

made the uneventful course of their days at Harmonie insupportable.

These objections, formless in the beginning, hourly gathered force, and found expression in terms of dissatisfaction. Count Theodor, feeling himself responsible for the situation, took a course that proved how little he understood the true nature of the community. He conceived the idea that the very fundamentals of the agreement could be changed to meet the requirements of the new members, and advocated such a measure with increasing openness. George Rapp detected the treason at work, and secretly exerted himself to bind the hearts of the original communists the more closely to himself, although he gave no sign of being aware of the disaffection.

To Hugh Veneno, Otho Rapp, and Great Peter this disturbance in the too placid current of their life had the zest of novelty, excitement, and action. They threw themselves into the struggle with valor and boyish enthusiasm. To Otho's deep and loyal nature this opportunity to stand by his grandfather was very welcome. By doing so he could proclaim his own fidelity to the ties of blood, which he secretly felt the other had outraged, and he could prove their worth in the vicissitudes of life. For Hugh, George Rapp had the natural attraction that the bold, open, strong and active temperament has for normal youth in all circumstances; and, as judgment and imagination ripened, his love deepened into idealization.

What could be more welcome than the opportunity to espouse the quarrel of one's hero, when that hero is of the quality that compels success? From love to war is the arc of the manly heart, and Hugh's, sore from the estrangement between himself and Trillis, swung very willingly to the other end of it.

The instinctive jealousy which Hugh had felt from the moment of Theodor's arrival at Harmonie found an echo in the other's breast. Intuitive enmity sprang up between them and Hugh's activity as the partizan of George Rapp made Theodor's convictions imperative. He formulated an alluring doctrine of the universal right of man to happiness and the obligation to pursue it; he characterized celibacy as a monkish superstition; he reproached the Rappites for taking thought for creature comforts and wealth, rather than the spread of their beliefs and intellectual advancement. These ideas he enforced with fiery young eloquence and a seer-like power of making his dream take form for others; and soon there was a growing sentiment in favor of deposing George Rapp, along with his ideas, and making Theodor von Korassel his successor. In a little while the village of Harmonie and the farms that girt it became the theater of constant argument, bitterness, and the unsettling of old beliefs and allegiance.

Meanwhile a strange change had taken place in the village life. Traders coming there from the surrounding country saw gay young women flaunt their

picturesque Rappite dress in the vicinity of mills and stores, which the demure sisters of the old community had modestly avoided. They met, also, roistering young brothers whose bearing and conversation shocked them, and there were scandals current of young men and girls who had been seen strolling together upon the roads leading into the village, comporting themselves in a manner unsuited to persons vowed to celibacy and a holy life. Hugh carried news of these things to Father Rapp, hot with desire to see them forcibly suppressed. But Father Rapp answered gently, forbore to rage, as he had been often known to do on less provocation, and urged Hugh to await in patience the ripening of events.

Others of his partizans had reached the limit of patience, when matters were hurled very near the crisis by one who, soberly considered, would seem to have the least power of all in that community to do so. This person was Elsie Barwé, a girl of twenty, born a Rappite, and never out of the community in her life. She was a quiet, shrinking creature who had developed a sort of lily-like womanhood, pure, cold, and mysterious. Her hair was pale as the silk from a cocoon, and as fine and shining; her delicate cheeks had a faint fugitive color, more like a reflection than the glow of red blood; her eyes were dark and liquid, of the color that has been likened to still and deeply-shadowed pools. All these things one might note by taking thought, for none of them challenged

the attention, Elsie's personality being unobtrusive as that of a wild-flower hiding under its own leaves. Only at one time and by one gift did she take hold upon the life of her fellow communists; she had a beautiful voice, and she sang at church. She sat with Trillis there because their voices blended well; though one was high, and sweetly thin, with the impersonal melody of a bird's, the other deep and rich, almost heavy, at times, with emotional possibilities.

One Sunday morning not many weeks after the advent of the new members, Elsie was strangely disturbed; her cheeks burned with unwonted color, her eyelids quivered, and her slender hands fluttered restlessly. Trillis was conscious throughout the service of throbbing emotion in the delicate frame beside her, and, putting her own firm hand over Elsie's trembling fingers, she found them moist and cold. Just before the closing hymn the excited girl sprang to her feet and stood swaying and gasping before the eyes of the astonished congregation; then she cried shrilly and in breathless haste:

"Father! Father Rapp! I have a message. Bid them listen!"

"We listen, Daughter. Deliver your message without fear," he answered gently and soothingly. She began incoherently, but, carried out of herself by her own earnestness, her voice rose on a clear and piercing note until it filled the church.

"O, Father Rapp!" she cried. "O Brothers! O Sisters of Harmonie! You who have known what it is to live! Do you ever think what you have made of life for us, who are young? It may be well to give up all for conscience' sake — wives and husbands, children and hearthstones; it may be well for those who have had the thirst quenched with their sweetness and shall remember the taste for ever; but shall it be counted unto us that you have made the sacrifice for us? — we who have known nothing, who have felt neither the joy nor the sorrow of natural affections? We have food and raiment and the law, but of all the fullness of living beyond these we have been bereft, nay, we have been denied! And in all the world there are no creatures so poor in living as we!

"Do the birds cease to mate because the Second Advent is near? The flowers to bloom because the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand? Look upon us! We are young, we are ready for happiness! Think of your own youth and the taste of joy — think, too, how quickly it went by!

"In the night-watches, when the church clock was ringing twelve, a light shone round me, and a soft hand soothed my aching head. Presently a voice — it was great with sound, yet it was gentle as a whisper, spake to me. 'Daughter,' it said, 'carry thou this message: The day of sacrifice is ended, the lamb is released from the knife, the heifer from the tether, and the way is opened to the sweet pastures and the

frolic of their mates. No more is it required that the young men shall go in heaviness and the maidens alone! The day of happiness is at hand; the timbrel shall measure the dance for young feet; the drum, the beating of young hearts; the lute, their whisperings together; the horn shall announce their joy! The solitary shall be again set in families, the righteous shall increase and rejoice in their children!' "

The slender figure swayed, the eyes burned in the white face, the words came with the rush and the power of prophecy. To the Rappites this gentle girl had become a sibyl, a prophetess, a creature touched with mystic fire. They hung upon her words and believed them the more for their very incoherence. When her voice trembled and broke, and, sinking downward, her form quivered and became suddenly rigid in the strange catalepsy sometimes produced by religious excitement, they counted it another evidence of supernatural possession, and bore her to her little room at Number Three, with tender reverence.

From this time the disaffection in the community spread rapidly. The Harmonists were, above everything else, mystics; no logic could ever have convinced them so entirely as poor Elsie's claim to a divine revelation. Father Rapp witnessed the daily withdrawal of his former disciples with a strange apathy. Brother Henrici and others, who from character and ability were closest to their leader, remonstrated with him, urging him to exert his unquestioned

personal power to stem the tide of disaffection. To their appeals he only replied that, if Elsie had really been visited by the angel of God, it was his duty to enforce the commands of which she was the mouthpiece. Until he knew beyond a peradventure that she had mistaken the source of her inspiration he must wait — and God would enlighten him in good time.

Meantime Elsie wandered about the village, a helpless, distraught creature, lifted by their superstition beyond the pity of all these tender-hearted men and women who had sheltered her all her life. Nor did they understand that she was consumed with fever, and that her ravings of trumpeting angels and counseling voices were the symptoms of a decline.

Brother Jung Scheller, rushing along the street in front of the general store, wholly absorbed in his thoughts, ran into Brother Hanno, who had but just returned from his exile with Brother Vitus. It was the meeting of fire and gunpowder.

"*Mein —!*" cried Brother Jung, and clapped his hand over his mouth.

"'What is in the bottle comes when the cork pops out.' If thy heart is hatching oaths, it is safest to open lips and let them fly. Swear, Brother, and ease thyself!" taunted Hanno.

Brother Jung's little round face grew more deeply purple, his eyes glared above his hand, but he knew that he dared not remove it. Hanno obligingly swore

some curious, military oaths, and recommended them to the testy little Rappite.

"Thou wilt feel better for them, Brother. They are suited to one whose temper is always bursting out of him whether there be reason or not reason."

"But I curb it. Oh, if I should speak out!" gasped Brother Jung.

"For the sake of heaven, do not speak out! You ran into me, which is harm enough. Why did you?"

"I was thinking, and saw you not. O Brother, we are fallen upon evil days!"

"'Thinking draws no water,' as the donkey said when the rick was burning. We go to the devil post-haste with that harebrained Count Theodor to drive us. The end comes fast to Harmonie, and all our pleasures here. Soon shall we be a flock of silly geese, with a fox for goose-herd."

"Why say you that, Brother? Is there news?" — and the little man grasped him excitedly by the arm.

"News? The Rappites are turning traitor every hour; George Rapp sits like an old fool in his dotage, and Count Theodor von Korassel is planning to be king. Is all this news, Brother Jung Scheller?"

"Look yonder! It is she whom the angel has visited!" Jung whispered in awe, as he pointed to Elsie, drifting across the street at that moment, her pale hair falling around her drooping face, her wasted hands fluttering in eager gestures, although no sounds came from her lips.

"Bah!" said Hanno, turning away angrily. "That girl needs a bed and a dose of physic. Angels? Her angel wears Count Theodor's breeches; he it is has filled her head with wild dreams. Give her a sick calf to nurse or a lost lamb to mother. Your empty heart wanders; your full one is content at home. Talk no more to me of that girl's angels, Brother Jung. I can let it go by that you are too cowardly to swear the oaths working inside you, but I'll countenance no traitor to Father Rapp. Hold back thy belief in revelations until he gets one. That will be a true one, as thou knowest, he being practised in such things. When his revelation comes it will be one to send these loose young Germans packing, and to burn the ears of all you weak-hearted fools who stand not by him when the charge comes."

"There be many," said Brother Jung, shaking his head. "Brother Lazarus Wulf, Peter Nitzer, Albert and Alois Wentz are all working hard to put the young count in Father Rapp's place."

"The rats that leave a storm-struck ship find themselves in the water," Brother Hanno remarked, and they parted, each thinking sadly upon the disasters that threatened Harmonie.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE GABRIEL STONE

But O the exceeding grace
Of highest God! that loves His creatures so,
That blessed angels He sends to and fro
To serve to wicked man.
How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succor us that succor want!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant.

EDMUND SPENSER.

Father Rapp, absorbed in the troubles which now pursued him as leader of a discontented, even a rebellious, community, absented himself from the direction of temporal affairs, leaving mills and workshops each to the care of its own overseer, and to the general supervision of Hugh.

Under the stimulus of responsibility, much that was still immature and shifting in the young man's character ripened and settled. For the moment his mind, surfeited with the vicissitudes of passion, turned eagerly to practical affairs, Trillis and their estrangement taking a place subordinate to machines and products and the excitement of trade.

Any morning at sun-up the communists might have

seen the tall figure of their leader, with head sunk upon his breast, looking strangely lonely as it crossed the fields, pausing not for flower, or bird-song, cloud effects or any of the beauties of nature that had heretofore been a constant source of happiness and interest. There was a secluded valley in the woods where he went to pray, a spot which his disciples held sacred and whither no foot followed. When they saw him seeking it each day, the hearts that were still loyal sent up prayers that God would not let him return empty of support and comfort.

Sister Bena had adopted Hugh in the expectation that her love for him was, in some mysterious way, to comfort her for another which had been denied her. She learned that a woman's affections follow two courses, parallel, but never uniting. The mother love, however full the current, does not encroach upon the channel through which the wife's love takes its way. Her love for the boy, strong and satisfying as she had hoped, gave her a great happiness; but it made no change in her feeling for George Rapp.

This hour of his trial was a time of suffering for her. She saw him growing daily more haggard; she read the agony in his deep-set eyes, felt the doubt and uncertainty that overwhelmed him. Every morning she watched him cross the fields to his secret place of prayer, and her heart was consumed by alternate appeals for help and reproaches of that higher power that did not succor him. At night, from twi-

light to midnight she watched for his return, sometimes from her bedroom window, sometimes hidden in the shrubbery of his own yard, always to read in his dragging step and drooping figure the failure to find help.

At last, one morning, her longing to share his agony drove her forth across the fields by the path his feet had worn to the place of his prayers. She knew it lay in the heart of a beech wood, and, when she came to the point where the way led into it along the course of a little wet-weather stream, her heart failed her. A beech wood has always an indescribable silence and sacredness, perhaps from the straight, whitish boles or the limbs drooping and spreading like the hands of sylvan deities invoking peace. Perhaps it is the strange tint of the light filtered through the leaves, or the absence of other trees, for the beech is an aristocrat and tolerates no intrusions. Whatever it was, Sister Bena was daunted by it; she could no longer follow the path, but, skirting the woods and climbing the hill, came into it from above. This course brought her to a point where she stood upon the rim of a valley, looking down on the very spot she had sought.

The valley was like a little basin, circular, rising gently and regularly from the center. The trees stood back from it, leaving a shaded circle of vivid green turf. In the center of the basin a huge granite boulder had stopped its southward journey, while

round it slabs of slate and sandstone rocks had been piled to form a sort of rude altar, before which a man lay prone on his face.

No sound came up to her from the valley, no voice of bird or rustle of leaf penetrated her consciousness; in all the world there was nothing but the agony crying out of that prone figure, with its arms stretched out in an expression of despair. The sight stirred her to defiance. She drew her little figure up and threw back her head, facing the God who denied the prostrate man.

"Hear him!" she cried. "Thou didst make him; Thou didst set him to this task! See to it that he fail not!"

It was not a prayer; it was the fierce protest that every strong soul makes, sooner or later; one that Sister Bena would never have made for herself. Love alone gave her the strength to pit her humanity against Divinity.

While she stood defiantly facing the sunlit and inscrutable sky, a voice came up to her from the valley, the exultant cry of a strong man:

"My God! My God!"

Turning, she saw George Rapp kneeling before the heap of stones, his hands clasped high above his head, his arms swaying in an ecstasy, his head thrown backward to face the skies or bending to kiss the stone before him; his whole attitude and every motion indicative of joy.

In the quick reaction of her own mood she did not hesitate, but ran down the hill and stood beside him. He was so intoxicated with joy that, although she was near enough to put her hand upon him, he did not know of her presence until she spoke.

"Father Rapp!" she cried, and wondered at the glorified face that he turned toward her.

Still kneeling, he pointed to the stone before him. It was an oblong slab of limestone, washed white by recent rains, partly imbedded in the soil directly in front of the rude altar. Sister Bena, stooping over it in the sunshine, saw that its flat upper surface was deeply indented with a colossal footprint of human shape and perfectly clear outlines. She stood gazing, dizzied by the nature of her conjectures. Ere they had taken definite shape, he began to speak with a quiet assurance.

"It is the footprint of the Angel Gabriel," he said. "I came down here to pray. I have come here for years to pray. This heap of stones has always been here, an altar raised, perhaps, to the god of some Indian tribe. This white slab has been here, too, never so plainly to be seen. It has been partly hidden by grass and fern. It seems to have arisen, perhaps from the rains. I have not noted it particularly until to-day. When I came this morning it was with the heaviest heart that ever I brought here. I said, 'God has forsaken me! My work has not found favor in His sight. He makes a simple girl His mouthpiece,

and He abases me. He has cast me down from my high place, and all that I have builded for His glory He will destroy in my sight.' And when I knelt as usual the words of prayer would not form upon my lips. I was dumb. Kneeling thus, a strange lassitude came upon me; I slept, I lay upon my face and was without sense or feeling. Then a presence wrapped me in a strange peace, and out of it a voice spake:

"'Arise! Gird on thy armor, the trial is ended; thy cause shall triumph, and thou shalt be exalted!'

"It was the same presence and the same voice that have come to me before in this spot; but to-day my despair had been deep, and, remembering that there are now many at Harmonie who might question my statements, I said:

"'Great Angel of God, I have been sorely tried and my faith wavers. I believe thee, but when thou art gone and I am alone in the weakness of mortality, who shall help my unbelief?'

"'Thou wilt find a token,' he answered me, smiling tenderly upon me.

"After that he gave me much instruction. When he had gone I lifted my head and lo! there was his footprint upon the stone!"

George Rapp told the story in a glow of exaltation. His huge frame seemed to swell and thrill with the sense of renewed power, his face shining upon Sister Bena with the light of spiritual joy. He was a mys-

tic; she, a loving woman. He could not doubt that the angel had visited him; she could not doubt what he believed.

Impatient to begin his triumph, he hurried before her into the village. Sister Bena followed slowly. At the outskirts of the town she met Hugh coming from the tannery, and sent him in all haste to Father Rapp's house. What she told him had a strange paralyzing effect; he was no mystic, though reared in the atmosphere of mysticism. His religion had been a belief in Harmonie as an economical venture, a boy's partizan love for a leader strong and bold and effectual, rather than any spiritual force. He was a Rappite; that he was also a Second Adventist and held many strange doctrines followed as a matter of course. He had not felt their truth, he had not in any vital sense believed them. There was nothing new in the idea of divine intervention in human affairs to him; still he found himself facing a doubt of it for the first time in his life. He hurried on to Father Rapp's house, burdened with a sense of disloyalty.

He found Brother Henrici, Brother Jung Scheller and others already seated in the large room, and Father Rapp, too exultant to sit in his chair, pacing up and down while he eagerly described the visit of the angel. Naturally his counselors fell at once into the discussion of ways of utilizing this event for the saving of the community. They were convinced that the majority of the seceding Rappites would return

to their allegiance upon hearing — and seeing — this proof of George Rapp's divine authority of leadership. It remained only to fix upon the way of making it known to them that would make the deepest impression upon them.

It was agreed to keep the secret until the Sabbath — this was Thursday — and to hold a service in the little valley upon that day, when the story of the angel's visit and the message he had left could be told in the presence of tangible evidence of its truth.

Throughout this discussion Hugh kept the silence of a young man among his elders, but his thoughts were traveling new and strange paths. He saw these good and devout elders at a distance which he had never before felt, and he realized for the first time that he and they were far apart. It marks a stage of growth when the maturing mind measures itself with those of a former generation and notes a divergence that must henceforth continue. In this case it was the difference, not of a generation, but of grand divisions of time.

They represented the ancients, the voyagers who merely sight strange shores and people them with monsters of the imagination. He was of the modern world; he belonged to the pioneers, the surveyors, the builders, to whom the beliefs of the past are superstitions, its ideals but dreams. Hugh was ill at ease at the conference; he who could have told upon demand the product of every mill and workshop of Harmonie,

who knew the yield of every farm and the market price of it, had no conception of the importance to its welfare of the spiritual element. So the generations alternate in their outlook upon life, and no one of them sees all sides of it. With some half-formed intention of speaking out his doubts, Hugh lingered when the others were gone. There was a striking change in Father Rapp's face. The reaction from strong excitement had suddenly set in, and he looked gray and tired. He returned to the table and threw himself down, his face half-buried in his arms. Presently he spoke, in a low broken tone:

"God tried me sorely, Hugh; I almost fear that He has remembered me too late." From the strong desire to comfort, rather than from faith, Hugh answered:

"How could that be, Father?"

George Rapp looked up and smiled. "It could not be," he said; "I am tired." There was a long silence before he continued: "My son, I wish you to see the stone with the footprint. Will you go with me?"

"Yes, Father; but I have been there many times, though I have not seen the stone."

George Rapp's face flushed with ready anger; the little valley had tacitly been sacred to his prayers. So far as he knew all had respected it.

Hugh understood the flush and explained: "I began to go, Father, when I was a little boy. I did

not know I should not. I went armed with a snake stick, and I hid behind the trees. I went to keep the Indians and the copperheads from you."

George Rapp's eyes filled with tears. He had a vision of his little guardian that was of piercing sweetness; the child's loneliness spake out of it. He put his arm across Hugh's shoulder in a shy caress. The boy's heart yearned to believe.

"You saw the angel, Father? His footprints are still upon the stone where he stood?"

"Yes, my son. I do not wonder that you can not believe it; almost I myself doubt it, and I have seen many wonderful things in my time. What am I that He should send His angel to visit me?"

The humility, the searching tenderness of the tone, the look of unearthly purity upon the strong face, most of all the arm about his shoulders, swept away Hugh's doubts, or rather closed his mind to them. The personality of Father Rapp was stronger than his own instinct for independent thought, stronger than unfolding manhood; everything in Hugh's nature that had opposed it went down before it. The time was coming when it was to try conclusions with the master passion, and the ease with which it had become dominant in the boy's soul was a sad augury for Trillis,— who, while the fate of Harmonie hung in the balance, and Hugh was beginning to take a man's part in affairs, was absorbed in grief for the joys she had voluntarily renounced.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE DAY OF THE REVELATION OF THE GABRIEL STONE

> The sum of all philosophy is this —
> Thou art a man, than whom there breathes no creature
> More liable to sudden rise and fall.
>
> MENANDER.

The Sabbath upon which he was to reveal to his followers the message of the Gabriel Stone dawned in midsummer splendor, and Father Rapp went out to greet its sunrise with joyous heart. Sorrow and care had long nourished humility in his spirit, and there was no note of personal pride in the thanksgiving with which he surveyed the beautiful village nestling among its fertile hills.

In the fresh silence of the morning, Harmonie lay before him in a unity which the meeting with any fellow man must have destroyed. The great bulk of the rooming-houses, the huge cross-shaped church, and the granary, whose soft yellowish sandstone walls melted more harmoniously into the sunny perspective, the slopes of orchard and vineyard and the river, lying deep in its verdant banks, the spiritual movements of which they were all the visible sign, filled him with ecstasy. Presently he paused before the church, and

stood gazing at the beautiful stone doorway. Following its fine lines his eye traveled upward to the carving upon its cornice. There was the mystic circle inclosing the rose of harmony, and referring to that text which held the promise of eternal glory for the community. He repeated it triumphantly:

"*And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.*"

But, so closely does the enemy of the soul pursue it with doubts, while he was trembling with religious exaltation, he was stabbed by the thought of Elsie Barwé, and her message. The vindication of his authority in the footprint upon the Gabriel Stone had not silenced the questioning of his own heart. What assurance had he that the child had not also had an angel visitant? Dared he dispute her message without proving its falseness? Was it false? How was it possible for a creature so innocent, so tender, and so ignorant, to make a false claim?

These disturbing thoughts had moved him to restless action, and he made the circuit of the church close. When he returned, the bell of the great clock on the roof was striking the hour of five. The mighty volume of sound shocked and tortured him; yet, here, cowering in the doorway, was little Elsie. She was white and wasted, her eyes were sunk deep in purple rings and her parched lips hung helplessly open to her

panting breath. George Rapp bent tenderly over her.

"Why are you here, my daughter, at this hour?"

She was quivering under the strokes of the bell, unable to hear him, and scarce aware of his presence. Her weak abandonment to the fury of sound touched him. He sat down beside her, and, taking her little cold hands in his own, held them firmly until the clock ceased to strike. Then, very gently, he repeated his question.

"I do not know," she answered. "The bell calls me; I must be here when it rings."

"But it is painful to you?"

"Yes, Father."

He drew the little wasted form nearer, his heart aching with pity. With an effort he remembered his duty and asked:

"My child, does the angel still come to visit you?"

"The angel?" She looked up wonderingly. "Oh, I know. No, he does not — perhaps — Father, do you not think that was a dream?" she asked with childish simplicity.

"Then there was no revelation? You were not bid to urge changes in the constitution of Harmonie?"

"No, Father. Why should Harmonie be changed? Is it not as God wishes?"

"You were not bid to urge marriage and love between man and woman?"

"Marriage? Does not God forbid that? Love,

love? O Father!" she cried, throwing herself upon his bosom and clinging there. "I wish it were not wrong to love! Lately the brothers and sisters look so strangely upon me, and question me always about that dream of the angel, as if I were not the same to them any more; and no one understands, and I suffer — then — O Father! it must be sweet when some one loves you and takes care of you all the time!"

He pressed the thin little body to his breast, smoothed the pale hair from the hot brow while his tears fell on it, and called her many a tender name in the homely affectionate German of the tabooed family life that is so sweet to his race. Then, rising with her in his arms, he carried her to Sister Ermengarde, to whom he explained that the child was ill and must have tender nursing.

By this time the village was astir, and the musicians were gathering in front of his house for the opening service of the Sabbath. The day of his triumph had begun. He had had his moments of exalted pride, when he had looked upon his work and gloried in it, but it was shadowed now by the thought of Elsie. His personal responsibility for the happiness of so many weighed always heavily upon his heart. It was often like this: When he rejoiced in the onward and upward progress in which he was leading humanity he was given to see what tender and helpless things were crushed beneath the wheels. Only the strong

conviction that he was chosen of God for this advance made it possible for him to go on.

It was inevitable that George Rapp's triumph should bring chagrin to Theodor von Korassel. He had marched in the procession of the Harmonists, led by the band, and singing sweet old German hymns, to the valley in the beech woods. He had heard George Rapp, standing upon the ancient altar, tell, with a dramatic simplicity, the story of the angel's visit. He had seen the Rappites come one by one, in the order of age and service, to look at the footprint upon the stone. The elders gazed reverently, and made way; they were those who had not doubted the divine authority of their leader. There were others to whom the proof of it was the conviction of disloyalty, and who paused to renew their vow of fidelity. Others kissed it in ecstasy, or threw themselves upon it with shrieks and sobs of overwrought feeling. Finally, all knelt around it in a semicircle, while Father Rapp poured out his full heart in prayer. Even Theodor felt that he could not make it less than a pæan of triumph, for that the Lord had come to the help of His people against the spoiler.

Theodor had gone to the altar, had examined the stone, had listened to George Rapp courteously and, he believed, impartially, but when the high tide of emotion broke, he slipped away toward the village.

His thoughts were bitter. Without being able to account for the footprint, he did not for one moment

believe in a supernatural origin for it; but he did believe George Rapp a charlatan, working ruthlessly upon the superstition of his people.

"It is a singular thing," he said to himself, "that men are so gullible and so easily enslaved; for these Harmonists are the veriest slaves that ever toiled for a master, and this Rapp as tyrannous a master as ever robbed men of their wills and imposed his own upon them! He brings several hundred persons here, and, under the promise of social and religious liberty, makes them toil for him, sow and reap, and amass wealth for him. They give up family ties at his demand, they yield every jot of individual inclination or ambition. He pretends to have established a new order of things. It is the old order recreated with a devilish ingenuity, and made eternal by the help of stupidity and superstition.

"And yet, this man's material success is evidence that the thing can be done, that communism is the cure for the evils of society. Here the practical side of it is clearly worked out; communism pays. Had this man any real love for his fellow man, he has it in his power to make happiness universal. He could make education as general as he has made manual skill; intellectual activity as common as he has made industry. He could introduce here the theories rife in Europe; he could invite the scientists and progressionists of every country to his assistance, and give the world an example of the ideal society."

So musing, Count Theodor came face to face with his father, who had remained in the village, and, turning, walked beside him along the quiet streets where the afternoon sun was casting lengthening shadows. Brother Laurence carried an enormous iron key, and when they reached the stone fort, or granary, stood hesitating at the entrance.

"There is a neglected duty in here," he said, with an apologetic smile. "Wait but the quarter of an hour, and I shall have finished it and returned to you."

"I will go inside with you, father, as it is one of your buildings I have not visited." It was easier for Brother Laurence to yield than to resist, so, though he preferred to go into the fort alone, he quietly turned the key in the lock and admitted his son.

The small high windows filled with a lattice of hand-wrought iron lighted the vast interior but dimly. Shadows hovered in the corners and clung among the monstrous beams and distorted the bales and boxes along the walls. At this season the cellars were filled with farm products, and the rich odors of fruit and the earthy smell of vegetables came up through the flooring. Brother Laurence led the way up the stairs, and his son noted at every step the wealth of Harmonie.

"Is your storehouse always as full as this?" he asked.

"It is less full at this season," his father replied. "The crops require the labor of all the community in

the spring and summer; the factories do their heaviest work in the winter season. By spring the lower room will be full of woolen, cotton, and linen goods,—shoes, hats, harness, leather, iron tools, baskets, and many things that are made by brothers or sisters whose individual talent Father Rapp loves to encourage."

"And every bale of goods and every change of seasons bring more wealth to the community and more power to George Rapp," the count said bitterly.

"It seems to be with God's blessing," Brother Laurence answered. "I regret that you can not revere him as others do," he added timidly.

Theodor did not answer, and they went on in silence to a door at the end of the building. Brother Laurence produced the key, and they entered a small room containing a desk and a cupboard built of oak and effectively decorated with hand-hammered hinges and locks of rough iron. Unlocking it, he took out an iron box, and set it upon the desk in the light of the small high window.

"I came here to count the gold in this box," he explained. "Since Brother Hoggart's death in June, I have been custodian of the funds from the farms and the merchant mills. I fear I am an indifferent man of business. Twice have I counted it, and am not yet sure of my exactness. It is hard to keep one's mind on moneys, and the task is long."

As he spoke he arranged the gold pieces and notes

in orderly piles. Count Theodor's lip curled, and his eyes flashed scorn at fate. He watched his father's delicate fingers moving among the coins, until, unable to control the bitter thoughts clamoring for expression, he turned from the desk, and stood gazing out of the window. The beautiful view of the village nestling in the embrace of its wooded hills failed to soothe his irritation. On the contrary, the peace and prosperity but increased it.

Immediately under the window, inclosed by high and thick hedges, he saw what at first sight appeared to be a miniature village, with little streets paved with white shells, and little white cottages of fanciful architecture set in orderly rows upon them. The breeze, rising with the waning of the afternoon, seemed to frolic in this little inclosure, stirring up clouds of white feathers, and blowing them about in whirls and delicate drifts that gave it a look of fairy-land.

Distracted from his bitter thoughts by this unusual scene, Theodor raised the window and leaned out for a better view. His gaze, traveling down the rough stone wall of the granary, met that of a pair of strange, beady eyes, set in a thin, sharp face, uplifted to the window. Instantly the creature loosed his hold upon the wall, and slid down to the turf below, revealing a tall, thin figure, quaintly clad in a loose garment of white.

"What is this, father?" Theodor asked; and, coming to the window, Brother Laurence explained that

they were looking into the poultry yards, which were kept by a simple lad whom some of the brothers had found long ago, half-frozen, upon one of the roads leading into Harmonie. The Rappites had fed and warmed him, as was their habit with wanderers; but this one had remained among them of his own accord. When it was discovered that he had a strange love for fowls and a wonderful power over them, he had been placed in charge of the poultry.

"However," Brother Laurence continued, "he will have none but white fowls in his flocks. Whenever one shows a tinted feather its master condemns it to the cooking pots of the sisters. 'Dummer Hans,' as the villagers call him, is a poor innocent who leads his own life, remote from us all, and does no ill."

"He was climbing up the wall when I startled him but now. It looks an impossible thing. Surely he could never climb high enough to enter at the window?" Theodor said with momentary interest. Brother Laurence, treating the incident as one of no importance, returned to his task at the desk. Theodor closed the window and stood beside him. The gold and notes, arranged in orderly piles before him, revived his former train of rebellious thoughts.

"There should be eight or ten thousand dollars in that box," he said. "With that sum the regeneration of human society might be begun."

"It is begun, I think, Theodor, here in Harmonie; and this sum — I have twice made it twelve thousand

dollars — will certainly be devoted to its continuation."

"Is it possible that you think that, Father? That you take this autocracy of peasants for the ideal community? Do you not see that this Rapp is a tyrant, and these people enslaved, governed through their ignorance and superstition? Where is the equality which is the very corner-stone of the ideal society? Where is the personal liberty; and, above all, where is the intellectual advance that belongs to it?

"A thousand years of this slavery to George Rapp's thrifty, parsimonious, narrow ideals would not elevate humanity in the least! Oh, it is pitiful! It is maddening to see what a golden opportunity is sacrificed here! If I had that sum I could take out of this community all the more enlightened and aspiring members, and I could establish such a perfect commonwealth, such a genuine brotherhood, such an era of progress and enlightenment as would make men like gods and earth a paradise!"

His young voice swelled and filled the dead silence of the great building, thrilling the heart of his unworldly old father, and reviving in their glory hosts of the bright dreams of his youth.

"The irony of it all lies in the fact that this gold belongs to the very persons who must forego all this for want of it. Bah! Father, put it away and let us go out into the air."

Brother Laurence gathered the coins into their box;

locked it, and put it away in its cupboard, and mechanically made that also secure. Then they took their way silently through the gloomy store-rooms and out into the paling sunshine, the son still smarting from his acrid thoughts, the father still occupied with the resurrection of old dreams.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE NEW IDEA BECKONS

My lungs draw braver air, my breast dilates
With ampler manhood, and I front both worlds
Of sense and spirit, as my natural fiefs,
To shape and then reshape them as I will.

LOWELL.

In the week following the revelation of the Gabriel Stone the Harmonists were busy loading the last fleet of flatboats which they would be able to send out in that year. Flour, spirits, leather, oil, saddles, hats, broadcloth, and other products of the community were carried to New Orleans by river, and the season of transportation was limited by high water, low water and ice; it was therefore necessary to employ every moment of the propitious time.

The band stationed at the wharf played cheering music, to which the brothers timed their steps and the labor of lifting and loading. Father Rapp went among them, encouraging and sharing their toil, as was his custom. Sensitive to the fluctuating temperatures of the human spirit — as a leader of men must be — he felt that the work went on less cheerfully, with less of unity and good will, than ever before.

But his consciousness of being divinely authorized protected him from a natural pang at this changed attitude of his disciples, and he met it with a confident sweetness of spirit which was gradually recalling them to their obedience.

Meanwhile, Count Theodor sat upon a box or bale, and watched the loading in bitter silence. His thoughts could be read in his delicate and sensitive face, darkened with disapproval, and in his attitude of sullen dejection. His followers amused themselves in various ways, but seldom by taking part in the labor. And in the periods of rest they mingled with the others, eagerly waging the old controversy of the change in the constitution of Harmonie.

The finding of the Gabriel Stone and the consequent revival of George Rapp's power, while they seemed at the time triumphantly to carry the day for the old order of things, did not completely rout the forces of anarchy. There is something in the nature of a belief in the divine authority of a fellow man, such as the Rappites held for their leader, that will not bear discussion; and, since many of the followers of Count Theodor were adepts at argument, the simple, uneducated Harmonists were no match for them.

At one place on the river bank, boxes of the cloth products, linen, jean, and linsey, and the incomparable broadcloths of the Harmonie looms, were being loaded by a little group of older brothers. They

were somewhat removed from the others, and their apparently earnest conversation could not be overheard. Brother Hanno was of their number, and Brother Fabian, Brother Martin, and Brother Osbald. This last was a little, round man, with a face as rich as a winter apple, encircled by crinkled white hair and a crinkled white beard, which grew around his neck like a ruff and made an exquisite background for the warm tints of his cheeks and chin. His little brown eyes had twinkled so often that they had knit the flesh around them into a maze of pleasant wrinkles; but to-day they had a stricken expression, the more piteous for being so unwonted. He worked at times with feverish energy, then relapsed into a sorrowful inactivity which spread a sympathetic distress among his brothers.

One surprising result of the disaffection which Count Theodor and his people had sown had been the change in Brother Hanno. His old, carping, rebellious spirit had fallen from him, and he was suddenly become the hottest partizan and the tenderest, most sympathetic friend of the once hated leader. He could think of nothing but the injury done to George Rapp and his cause; he fumed with anger, and suggested impossible reprisals.

"Look you, Brothers, at that fellow by the flour barrels. He is leading Brother Peter Schindler astray this moment — the old empty-kopf! Ah! 'Near kin are the worst friends,' as the fox said

when the foxhounds were chasing him. If only Father Rapp had known the great Little Emperor now, he would deal with these trouble-makers as they deserve. He would run them into the Wabash or the woods with stripes on their backs."

"Brother Peter avoided me when I would have spoken with him last night," said Brother Fabian sadly. "I fear he has listened to the mischief-makers. And Brother Wulf Lubbermann is openly talking of a new constitution again, though he kissed the footprint on the Gabriel Stone, and was cured of a wen upon his neck, thereby."

"Brother Jacob Wurtz is also wavering, I fear," said Brother Martin.

He and old Hanno were stooping together to take up a box of goods, but his words acted like an electric shock upon his companion, who jerked himself erect, and seemed to liberate by accident a stream of French oaths, of which his companions only understood the spirit. Perhaps their own sense of grief and wrong found thus a vicarious outlet, for they let it pass without the reproving comment which was considered a duty.

A moment later a man, long of limb, muscular, and handsome, came strolling carelessly toward them. He greeted the old brothers in a loud and hearty tone, and clapped his great hand upon Brother Osbald's shoulder. The old man shrank from the liberty, and his ruddy face grew ashen.

"Good day to you, Brother John," said the gentle Fabian. "Brother Osbald's heart is heavy, as are all our hearts, with this sad falling-off of many of our brothers."

The young man's face flushed, and he answered hastily and eagerly:

"It is true that many think Count Theodor has right. The old constitution suits better the old men, but for us, who are young and who would live, it is too narrow; it cramps our powers."

"Oh," sputtered Brother Hanno. "Oh," — choking upon the oaths it might not be well to utter. "He shows his breed who brays with asses," he said at last, and turned his back upon the young man. Brother Osbald looked about him in a bewildered way, and sank on a box, panting and pale. Brother John looked sadly down at him, but did not drop his air of cheerful bravado.

"When a man has thought it all over, and come honestly to believe a thing, then he should stand to it. Father Rapp has led us well, but times have changed; he is not young, and he will not change with them. The regeneration of society, the rights of man, universal happiness, can not be brought about by people living as we do, shut off from the world, depending only upon prayer and sacrifice ——"

The manly voice broke at last, for Brother Osbald, with his face buried in his hands, was sobbing like a child. Brother John hesitated a moment, then, with

a strange timidity, slipped his great arm around the elder man's shoulder, and drew him close.

"Father," he said with infinite tenderness.

It was the first time in many years that he had spoken the proscribed name, and Brother Osbald, shaking with joy at hearing it once again, threw himself upon the broad breast.

"My son! O my son!" he cried. Then, timidly putting up his hand until it rested upon the young man's cheek, he began to plead:

"Do not listen to them, my son; their words are a snare. They will lead you into outer darkness. Return to your faith in Father Rapp and the Daughter of Zion. This will break your mother's heart — Sister Martha — who has sorrowed all these years because she could not tend and fondle you. Her only joy has been to stitch your shirts and knit your hose, and, sometimes, to set the custard tart or apple cake that you used to love upon your window ledge to ease her mother's heart with serving you. Oh, if you are false to the community for which we gave up our marriage ties and you, how can she bear it? How be faithful until He comes? And when He comes and you are not here, what are we to say?"

Brother John listened with tears streaming down his rugged face, but this new emotion of filial love and pity could not stem the tide of new ideas and ambitions. He gently loosened his father's clinging arms and arose.

"It is very hard," he said softly, "but I have never believed as you do, Brothers. From my boyhood I have felt the cruelty of your laws, and my heart has been hot within me that I must be unfathered, unmothered, unwived; alone, and always hungry for my own. I am not disloyal, I have no faith to break. I am simply a man who will have a man's rights and the gifts of the good God."

It was Brother Hanno who led Osbald to Number Three and brought Father Rapp to comfort him. It was he, also, who convinced the leader of the Harmonists that the time was come for decisive action.

"The poison spreads like a copperhead's venom," he said, "and you should go at it like killing snakes, all at once and all alive."

"And so I will, Brother," George Rapp replied. "No longer will I give my back to the smiters and my cheek to them that pluck off the hair. I will say unto them: 'Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword. For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, for henceforth there shall no more come into her the uncircumcised and the unclean.'"

Frederic Richardt, the commercial agent of the Rappites, was a man of culture and sweetness of character. He had, also, a certain gentle worldliness which won him a welcome in every part of the great territory, extending from Pittsburg to New Orleans, in which he transacted the business of Harmonie.

His point of view was American, he was progressive, eager, and daring, having both resource and adaptability. George Rapp was much under his influence, and the agreement to which he consented in this crisis was an extreme instance of Frederic Richardt's power to dominate a character so dominant. Father Rapp would have dealt summarily with the seceders, casting them out without paltering, but he was induced to propose a compromise so generous as to seem a weakness. It was that the question of separation should be submitted to the vote of both factions; and it was actually agreed that, in case the majority should choose a new constitution and the leadership of Count Theodor von Korassel, George Rapp and his faithful followers were to forfeit the village and the estate of Harmonie and go out of the community. This amazing decision was received with contemptuous wonder by the malcontents, and dismay and fear by the faithful.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE OLD ALLEGIANCE HOLDS

Hail to the steadfast soul
Which unflinching and keen,
Wrought to erase from its depths
Mist and illusion and fear!

Hail to the courage that gave
Voice to its creed, ere the creed
Won consecration from time!

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The day set for the vote upon the question of separation was the saddest that ever dawned upon Harmonie, and nature, as if in sympathy, made it memorable for black and threatening weather. Many of the black locust trees, of which the Harmonists were especially fond, went down in the storm of that day; swaths were cut through the forests, roofs were torn off, cattle-sheds were wrecked, and the flower-gardens of the village devastated. The river rose far beyond its banks by nightfall, and all that then remained of the verdure that had decked the earth at the coming of the recruits two months before was destroyed by the sudden and intense cold.

Though the lightning appalled, the wind buffeted them, and all their garments were sodden with rain, every member of the community struggled through the storm to the church and by mid-afternoon sat

silent in its gloom and, in their absorption in the pending struggles, scarce heard the wind shriek around it or the rain beat at its windows.

There had been no preparation for discussion of the question at issue, both parties agreeing that the last argument had been urged, and that the result lay now with God. Even the faces of the frivolous youth of Count Theodor's party were sobered, while the older Rappites, faithful and unfaithful, were pale with the menace of this hour. There were few tears, since so many had been shed, and there were few prayers, since none dared call for help from the fear of the Psalmist: *Lest if Thou make as though Thou hearest not, I become like them that go down into the pit.*

In the long silence that Rappite custom held at the beginning of every religious meeting, the passions raging in all hearts gave tongue, and the tumult of the storm — thunder, shrieking winds, the ominous creaking and crash of tree or building, and the frequent lightnings that tore the lurid gloom of the church — were only symbols of the fiercer storm within their souls. Suspicion, old jealousies and forgotten wrongs rose up and witnessed against suspected brothers; even those who had been welded together in long friendships studied each other furtively, and every face became a white and passion-tense mask to questioning eyes.

Father Rapp opened the meeting with the daily prayer, not referring in his plea to the special need

in which they stood; still, his voice had an undercurrent of supplication and a tenderness which touched their hearts. A table before the altar held the Great Book of the Harmonists, and around it sat Frederic Richardt, Brother Henrici, Theodor von Korassel, and two of his supporters. Frederic Richardt explained the method of voting and announced that they were ready to proceed, when Theodor sprang up, as if from an impulse, and stepped to the front of the altar. The ghostly lights from a western window illuminated his figure, and the sense of some strange electric energy changing it fastened the attention of his hearers, and they listened in a toleration which no one else could have gained at that moment of tension.

"I came seeking you at Harmonie," he said, "as a young man seeks the heroes, sages, saints or warriors whose deeds have stirred his soul and whose example beckons to the height of his dreams. Never in my childhood nor in my unfathered and unguided youth had I one doubt of your wisdom in choosing this path to the highest good — this method of reforming or regenerating mankind. I was a faithful Rappite at the cost of natural affections and the worldly ambitions of a young man of my class. I tell you these things that you may see that it is what I have found here, not the spirit in which I came, that has shattered all my dreams of your greatness and turned all my trust in your wisdom to doubt. I sought a new Kingdom of Heaven upon earth where all men should be

free, all equal, all enlightened, and I have found a petty autocracy, whose tyrant governs you through superstition and ignorance — a commercial venture founded in the greed and vanity of one man, whom you serve blindly and to whom you are but slaves and beasts of burden. You lay your holiest ties at this man's feet and know not why he, more than another, should so dominate you ——"

"Hold, young man!" A clear voice rang from the women's side of the church, and Sister Bena stood panting and flashing in her place. She lifted her little hand and, with a gesture that swept all the congregation into her triumph, cried:

"The Gabriel Stone! The Gabriel Stone!" The sisters echoed her cry and the brothers turned it into a shout. "The Gabriel Stone! The Gabriel Stone!" and they hurled it at Theodor; reproach, refutation, and their declaration of faith condensed in three words.

"The Gabriel Stone?" he repeated quietly. "Ah! Your hearts were lifted up when you saw that footprint! It was to you the direct revelation of God's approval of George Rapp. It was his credential from Heaven. You kneeled to it, you worshiped it, some of you were healed of old ills by touching it; it is your miracle, your bow of promise, your 'Tables of the Law.' You believe in it, and you make it your only argument against all the mistakes and wrongs of which I accuse your leader.

"But does George Rapp believe in it? Listen yet a little — I beg you to hear me out. Why, if he believes in it, has he not acted upon the authority it gave him? Why has he permitted, even arranged, the ceremony in which we are to take part to-day? Is it like George Rapp to palter, to compromise, to give an advantage to a rival? We are but few and we are strangers. Why has he not driven us forth at once, if he is sure of his own divine authority? He is not sure, he dares not act upon it. He gives us a vote in the existence of your community; he puts into our hands a weapon with which we may yet destroy it, because he has ceased to believe in himself and dares no longer play on your superstitions."

If he continued, no one heard his words. The temperate Rappites were aroused at last, and the church was full of the surging murmur of amazed and angry voices. The men sprang to their feet, the women sank to their knees. The noises of the storm beat at their ears, the great walls groaned, the timbers strained, fierce volleys of hailstones shattered the glass, and the winnowed rain swept through the windows in sheets of fine chill spray. The lightning, as if it were the wrath of God, stabbed the darkness, and men shrank together afraid. And in their fear their anger pulsed and grew upon them like a sickness. The younger and rasher of the faithful Rappites were glowering at Theodor with vengeful eyes, threatening, and urging one another; but the older brothers,

tried in many a fire of experience, fixed their patient eyes faithfully upon Father Rapp and awaited his action.

He sat at ease in his high carved chair, his great hand lying loosely upon the arm of it, with no unconscious tension of the muscles to witness a disturbance in his spirit. His face, too, was relaxed in a look of benignity, and when he finally addressed Theodor it was in a sweet and placid tone.

"When you have finished, Brother," he said, "we will call for the vote upon the question of separation."

Theodor flushed and tossed his head with quick anger. Was his challenge not even worthy of contempt? Had he stirred this man no more than the brawling of the storm? He would reach him yet!

"I shall not finish until I have delivered my message to these misguided Harmonists," he continued stoutly. "It is a message of reproach and of persuasion. I reproach you, O my brethren, that you have followed a false light,— with consecration, self-devotion, and sanctity of spirit, it is true; but what shall that avail you when the light is false? You have given yourselves to one who will devour you and leave you a stinking carcass in the path of all who climb upward after you. Did you come out from among men for fields and gold and commercial power? Did you flee from tyrannies and strip yourselves of vanities only to acquire them again under a new tyrant? Throw off this yoke. Take this weapon of

destruction, this vote, which he has placed in your hands, and smite him with it! Destroy this Harmonie, which has become a discord in the ears of God, and help me to build another that shall contain all the music of humanity, a harmony indeed, which the angels shall chant in unison."

He stood a moment, spent with the passion of his appeal, and looked out upon the faces before him, striving to read some message of sympathy or understanding, and among them he saw, for the first time, the noble brow and the deep eyes of his father. Smitten with remorse at the look of sorrow which met his gaze, he sank trembling into his seat.

The Rappites sat now in benumbed silence. A weaker man than George Rapp must have quailed under it, and full of fear for his influence upon them must have been stung to answer Theodor; but he sat quiet, looking out upon his flock with serene and trustful eyes. At a sign from him Frederic Richardt opened the Great Book in which all their names were recorded and called upon them, one by one, to express their choice of leaders and constitution.

"Brother Heinrich Lutz."

"I am for Father Rapp and the old constitution," was the answer.

"Brother Peter Reinhardt."

"For Father Rapp and Harmonie."

"Brother Herman Legler."

"I am for progress and Count Theodor."

A chill swept over the church. The faithful called upon God in their fear. This was an unexpected defection and might be the first of many. Frederic Richardt spoke the next name huskily:

"Brother Jung Scheller."

For once the little man's fiery temper did not offend the Rappites. He sprang so quickly to his feet and shouted so fiercely in his excitement that he was as welcome as an army with banners coming to their rescue.

"I am for the Kingdom of God and Father Rapp."

"Brother Fabian Lentz."

"I am for Father Rapp and the old constitution."

"Brother Peter Schindler."

An old man arose and stood hesitating.

"My friends, I honor Father Rapp, but — but I have made up my mind with many prayers ——"

"Count him with the traitors!" shrieked Brother Jung.

"Sister Yetta Schindler."

Her name came naturally after her father's; she looked at him with fierce, unfilial eyes and answered clearly:

"I am a Rappite."

She was a tiny, timid girl, but her childish figure seemed to swell into the dignity of maturity and her voice thrilled through the church.

The next name was that of Otho Rapp, and, with the music of her declaration still in his ears, he repeated after her: "I am a Rappite." And Great

Peter, not reflecting that his name had not been called, responded, as was his habit, to Otho's emotion and echoed, "I am a Rappite."

"Brother Hans Saupert."

This was a young man of popularity and great promise. All hearts hung upon the answer he was long in giving. He looked about upon the familiar faces, and the softening of his eyes might have argued that he felt the tightening of old bonds, but he shook his head and murmured:

"I go with Count Theodor."

And so the answers varied, and the hearts of the listeners palpitated between hope and fear. A long list of the faithful was followed by the names of the recruits who seemed at that moment of tension to have multiplied many times. In their anxiety both sides lost count, and no man dared to hope that his was winning.

When the last vote was cast Frederic Richardt and Count Theodor computed the result, finding the majority in favor of Father Rapp and the old constitution much greater than the most sanguine had hoped.

The Rappites practised moderation in all things. They took their sorrows silently and patiently, and their joys as if they were sorrows. They sat quiet under this announcement, only their shining faces showing how deeply they felt their triumph. Father Rapp, who had taught them this temperate behavior, who was their leader and example, yielded in this mo-

ment to joyous weakness. When he heard the result of this trial he turned from white to red, his eyes flashed, he smiled grimly and said to his trusted friend, Brother Henrici, who stood near:

"*And the tail of the serpent drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth.*"

The weakness should be pardoned one who was no hero, but a simple, earnest man with a large share of lovable human frailties.

The adverse vote of the Rappites had not lessened Count Theodor von Korassel's power with his followers. They were eager to go where he led, and to set up a new community in perfect accord with his ideals. But, at the moment when life seemed to be offering the opportunity for which he had hoped, and from which he had expected such noble results, his spirit failed him.

George Rapp, with the generosity of magnanimous natures — a generosity that is willing to forgive an enemy when he is beaten — had persuaded the Harmonists to make a gift of the princely sum of one hundred thousand dollars to the seceders, one half of which they were to receive upon the separation, the other in six months.

The count did not share the elation of his followers at this news, but took it strangely. His old generous and friendly bearing seemed to desert him; he became morose and suspicious, and shrank even from his friends, avoiding companionship. The

change puzzled and disappointed Father Rapp, who liked to see a man offer a manly front to misfortune. Having thoroughly routed Theodor's attempts to interfere in his domain, Rapp was now eager to see him succeed in a community of his own. Himself a dreamer, he would gladly have listened to the young man's plans for his projected Utopia; but the attempt to win his confidence met with rebuffs which the masterful spirit of Father Rapp could ill brook. Still, this was Laurence von Korassel's son, and must ever have a claim upon his sympathy.

However, he felt it wise to hasten the departure of the seceders, in order to restore the former quiet and content of the community. Accordingly, as early as possible after the decision of the Rappites, the count with a hundred and seventy-five followers left Harmonie to establish a new society upon lands they had purchased for the purpose, some thirty miles away.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE BRAND OF CRIME

For hence the lesson draw
To reckon no man virtuous till ye see
The closing day; until he pass the bourne
Which severs life from death,
Unscathed from sin.

Paraphrase from Sophocles.

George Rapp realized the perplexity and sorrow in so gentle a nature as Brother Laurence's at this crisis in the affairs of the community. He could understand the paternal love which prevented him from being wholly loyal to the interests of Harmonie as represented by himself, and he could appreciate the loyalty that stood in the way of throwing in his lot with Count Theodor and the disaffected.

It was with genuine pleasure, therefore, that he heard the schoolmaster's request to be sent to Shawneetown, Illinois, in place of Brother Frederic Richardt, who made semi-annual visits to the store which the Harmonists had established there. He smiled to think how little good the gentle dreamer was like to do the business interests there, but was glad they could be used to veil the real wish for separation which was strong in both hearts.

Brother Laurence parted from his son and his fellow communists very quietly at the river's edge. He was almost brusk in his farewells, and hurried away from the hearty hand-clasps and jovial good wishes of his old friends, and hid himself in the dark interior of the little boat.

Sister Bena had made what she called a "housewife," a little work-bag containing needles, thread, buttons, and every convenience for that perfect order in which Brother Laurence was wont to keep his clothing. Not caring to present it before the others, she asked Hugh to carry it to him. He found the schoolmaster sitting dejectedly in the low, dark cabin of the boat, and was somewhat hurt that he should accept Sister Bena's gift so indifferently.

"Of course, it is a little thing," Hugh said warmly, "but Sister Bena is a good woman, and she thinks well of you."

"Do you, also, think well of me, Hugh?" The wistful tone and the searching eyes, whose full gaze he never remembered to have met before, puzzled the young man.

"I have no reason to think otherwise, Brother."

"But if there were a reason, would you believe me a guilty man because the others did?" The tone was low and shaken, and Hugh felt that he must answer this strange question with absolute truth.

"You have not been the same as the others to me, Brother Laurence," he said slowly. "It would take

much to make me think you a guilty man, no matter what others thought."

"The young are harsh and quick in their judgments; they do not understand how intricately the good and the evil are mixed in human character. You spoke of your father once; perhaps he was not as bad as you think. He might have acted from high motives." He looked wistfully at Hugh, who answered hotly:

"He could have had no higher motive than the care of the wife and child God gave him."

Brother Laurence bowed his head humbly, and sat silent. Hugh began to feel that the interview was ended. When he arose Brother Laurence arose also.

"God keep you, Brother!" he said stiffly to Hugh, who went back to the deck of the boat now moving slowly from the bank, and, in the pride of his youthful strength, leaped lightly across the yellow flood to the shore.

A week or two after the departure of the schoolmaster, Sister Drusia, Sister Lanie, and Sister Margreta sat together in the "big room" at Number Three in the late afternoon, and sewed carpet rags. One of the industries of Harmonie was the weaving of rag carpets. Twenty years later every cabin in Hoosierdom was made snug and neat with this kind of floor covering; but at the period of the Rappite community in Indiana it was a luxury within the reach of only the thriftiest pioneer families.

The sewing together of the long strips of cloth and the winding of the balls was a pleasant diversion for the sisters, and one which generally took a social form. On this particular afternoon the circle was small, Sister Ermengarde being kept away by Elsie's sickness, and others of the accustomed number busy with preparations for the Sabbath.

A more garrulous trio could not have been gathered from the entire village. All were old, all gentle-natured and simple-hearted. Sister Lanie was small as a child, black-eyed and black-haired, quick of motion; quick, also, to respond to the most delicate shades of feeling. Sister Drusia was large only in comparison with Sister Lanie. She had been rather tall as a young woman, but year by year her figure had drooped and her stature shrunk; the sweet humility of her spirit probably being responsible for this change in her body. Sister Margreta was the heaviest woman in Harmonie; but Nature had given her a large and powerful frame to bear the weight of flesh, and she moved with ease and a certain massive grace. She, too, had a sweet humility, in a single direction; she had never married, and belonged to a generation when not to be chosen for wedlock was a subtle reproach which women were expected to atone for by making themselves humbly useful to forbearing relatives. Sister Margreta was fortunate in being a member of a celibate community, where, if anywhere, her failure might be condoned. But the wives of Har-

monic, although they repudiated the relation, were tenacious of their honors, and maiden sisters like Sister Bena, Sister Brunhild, and Sister Margreta were made to feel inferiority in experience and dignity.

On this particular afternoon, while the rain was falling with gentle obstinacy, darkening the room prematurely, the three sisters drew close to the small, high windows, and talked of dreams while they sewed.

"I had the strangest dream two nights ago that I ever heard of anybody having," Sister Lanie began. Sister Drusia, whose life had had so many unaccountable sorrows that she had turned to the supernatural as the only solution of them, was fired by the mention of dreams; and so eager was she to tell of her own that she stopped winding and watched Sister Lanie with bright eyes, listening, not to her narration, but for the slightest chance to interrupt her.

"I thought," Sister Lanie continued, "that my mother was married again to a second husband, and it almost broke my heart."

Nobody thought how many years Sister Lanie's old mother had been lying safe from temptation in a graveyard of Würtemberg. Her tone was so full of feeling that Sister Margreta sighed for sympathy, and Sister Drusia, with her own dream pressing hard for utterance, echoed the sigh.

"I thought he was just as kind to me — he bought me a pair of little red shoes. I must have thought I was a child, for I took the shoes. And then I re-

membered that mother had married again!" Her voice broke, and she paused to wipe away her tears. Sister Drusia did not let her resume.

"That reminds me of a dream I had last night," she hurried to say in her flat, sweet, feeble voice. "It was the strangest dream ever I heard of! I can't think whatever made me dream such a thing! It has followed me all day, and I fear it is a warning. I dreamed that I was at the riverside; not our river at all, but a mighty stream that roared and foamed; and Brother Laurence was beside me, and his face was that of a little child,— yet it was as old as his is,— and he carried dandelions, oh, many of them! His arms were full of them, his pockets stuck out with them, and they fell all around him as he stepped. And then — it was the strangest thing! — but the dandelions turned into money — piles of gold — and little green snakes ran all over them!"

"Did you kill any of the snakes? If you did, that is a sign you will conquer your enemies," Sister Lanie interrupted.

Sister Drusia, who had never made an enemy in all her gentle, unselfish life, shook her head sadly.

"No, I think not. And I thought the branches were snapping off the trees and falling all around me, and there was no wind! I remember thinking how strange it was. I thought there was not a bit, but of course there was, else how would the branches fall?" She paused, groping for accuracy. "There is always

some wind when the river foams, is there not? It is the strangest dream I ever heard of anybody having!"

"I do not remember my dreams long enough to tell them," said Sister Margreta wistfully. "It may be you ate something that did not agree."

Both dreamers looked so hurt at this suggestion that she smoothed it over as quickly as possible.

"It does seem strange there was no wind and the branches falling around you. I do wonder why such a dream was sent you, Sister? Could harm have come to Brother Laurence, think you?"

"My dream was the strangest thing," Sister Lanie interposed jealously. "Think of dreaming of marriage! I have not seen a wedding in many a year."

"And your mother was not a woman to make a second marriage, Sister. I remember her well," Sister Drusia said sympathetically.

"I do not know why you should say that, Sister; my mother made the second marriage. Why is it not as well as to make the first?" asked Sister Margreta warmly.

"You do not understand these things, Sister, having not been married," said Sister Lanie, with the little air that Margreta hated.

"No, I do not think it right to marry. I believe as Father Rapp did from the first; 'It is better to keep the heart free for spiritual things,'" she said a little proudly.

Sister Lanie answered hesitatingly:

"Yes, that is true, Sister; but we who are married formed the ties before he taught that. As soon as we knew that it was wrong ——"

"Sister," Drusia interrupted, fluttering with the excitement of expressing an adverse opinion, "it is not that marriage is wrong; the feeling that leads to it is not wrong. I will never think that. Those who have known — One can give up living with one's husband for conscience' sake, but one can not cease to feel ——"

She was too excited to finish coherently, but the others understood. Even Sister Margreta, who had not known love and marriage, read Sister Drusia's heart and respected her fidelity to the love of her youth.

A little later the brothers who lived at Number Three began to come in from various labors, and sat waiting in the room where the sisters sewed until the supper should be announced. Sister Drusia being but a guest to-night, the brothers coming in greeted her hospitably. They were Brother Fabian, Brother Martin, and finally little Brother Christopher. He came in very quietly, as was his habit, and, being short-sighted, did not see Sister Drusia at once, and Brother Martin said:

"We have a guest to-night; it is Sister Drusia."

All eyes were turned upon Brother Christopher. The Rappites were not without a taste for sentiment,

and these two had been husband and wife, and seemed never to be able to forget the relation as completely as many did. Brother Christopher came forward at Brother Martin's words, and Sister Drusia arose with her ball of carpet rags in her hand and stood beside her chair. Those who were near could see that her little figure quivered with excitement. Brother Christopher went stiffly up to Sister Lanie and extended his hand.

"Are you well, Sister?" he asked ceremoniously.

"I am well, Brother; I hope that you are well, also?"

"Yes, Sister."

He dropped her hand and passed on to Sister Margreta. By this time his eyes had traveled beyond her and were fixed upon the little drooping figure of his old wife. He put out his hand, and clumsily missed Margreta's extended toward him. As for her, Rappite nun as she was, the feeling thrilling between these married hearts touched hers also. The wistful pain of loving seized upon her own and set it to beating wildly. When she answered Christopher's question, saying: "I am very well, Brother, and I hope you are so, too," her voice shook and she blushed in the fear of betrayal. When at last he had reached Sister Drusia and held out his hand to her, Margreta turned away her head that she might not see the meeting of their eyes. The others were silent, and they, too, forbore to look upon the greeting.

"Is it well with you, Sister?" they heard him ask.

"Yes, Brother. Is it well with you, also?"

"It is well with me. God keep you, Sister."

"God keep you, Brother."

Then Brother Christopher came back and joined the group of brothers around the hearth upon which Sister Brunhild had lighted a fagot of twigs. The sisters, sitting in respectful silence, as became their sex, began to divine there was some topic of unusual interest under discussion. Sister Lanie finally drew up her chair and boldly asked:

"What is it that has happened, Brothers?"

They looked at each other inquiringly. They were Germans, and had an ample sense of masculine superiority; and while each one of them was secretly longing to tell the news to the sisters, they united in the pretense of doing it reluctantly. Brother Martin, being affable by nature and eager to please, was the first to speak.

"Well, you women will not rest, now that your curiosity is awake. I may as well tell you that a great loss has befallen the community. A box containing ten or twelve thousand dollars in gold and notes has disappeared."

The women sat aghast. Brother Martin, well-pleased with the effect of his disclosure, continued dramatically:

"The worst is yet to come. Brother Laurence had charge of the box; he is gone, and it is gone!"

"O Sisters!" cried Drusia; "there is my dream!"

"Did he take it with him?" asked Lanie quickly, jealous of Drusia's triumph.

"Who knows? It was not until a couple of weeks ago, when they came to pay the gift to the count and his followers, that the loss was discovered. Father Rapp kept it secret, and sent Brother Frederic Richardt to Shawneetown to ask Brother Laurence about it. He has not been at Shawneetown. There was not money enough to pay what had been promised, with that box missing, and so it came out."

"Where is Brother Laurence, then?" asked Sister Lanie, struggling with her bewilderment.

"'Tis well to ask," said Brother Martin, with the narrator's laugh at the hearer's ignorance. "He who can tell where Brother Laurence is can tell where the money is."

Sister Drusia came forward into the firelight, her small, sweet face full of tremulous feeling. She went, without being conscious of it, to Brother Christopher's chair and addressed him appealingly:

"Oh, it is not true! Do not think it of Brother Laurence! His face was so innocent in my dream. Besides, he couldn't do that thing."

Christopher answered soothingly:

"I think as you do, Sister."

Brother Martin said sharply:

"What are your reasons for disputing what many of the brothers believe?"

"Does Father Rapp believe it?" she replied with courage.

At this Brother Fabian remarked gently:

"It is true that he will not. When one asks him why he thinks Brother Laurence innocent when all things point to his guilt, like Sister Drusia he will only reply that Brother Laurence could not have done it."

The stamping of heavily-shod feet in the entry announced an arrival that clearly meant to be noticed. It was Brother Hanno, just returned from Count Theodor's new community, Philanthropia, whither he had been sent, ostensibly to make a friendly visit, carrying greetings and offers of help from the Harmonists, but secretly to find Brother Laurence and to trace the stolen money. At the supper-table he gave his housemates of Number Three a lively account of his visit. He had found the community in a most unpromising state of confusion.

"It is like King Petaud's court, where every one is master. Everything is everybody's business. The boys and girls know as much about the money affairs as the count himself. But Time doesn't ride in a corpse cart there; they live a pig's life — a short and a merry one. Every night they dance and make love like flies in summer, and they hold their meetings upon any excuse, or none. If a heifer gets an apple in her throat, they ring the bell and call a council and debate upon the best way to get it out until she

chokes to death — for lack of a greased rag. Nobody works in that community; nobody but the count. 'He has enough to do who holds the frying-pan,' said I to him when I saw him with the milking-stool. 'If you let them put the calf upon your shoulders, they will soon clap on the cow.'

"But he is as helpless as the toad beneath the harrow, who cried out against so many masters, meaning that each tooth pierced him and rolled him over to be pierced by the next one. But every day is not Sunday with them either; some are ill of the fever, some shaking with the chills, and there's many an eye was bright at Harmonie that is dull and salty at Philanthropia."

"But what of Brother Laurence? What of the money?" interrupted one of his impatient hearers.

"I know no more of either than a sow knows of a spinet. Brother Laurence has not been there, and as for the money, had they ever seen it, they would have blabbed, being no more able to hide a secret than a bad cold. No; Father Rapp must look otherwheres for both the thief and the gold."

"Do you think it possible — it is the strangest thing —" said Sister Drusia, looking bravely into his face, "but there are some who think that Brother Laurence ——"

"Herr Hoofs and Tail!" cried Hanno, springing up and rattling all the china upon the table with the blow of his vehement fist. "If any dares say such a

thing of Laurence von Korassel, he has Band-master Tauffé to reckon with. He was a soldier of France under the great Little Emperor, and he will know how to defend the honor of his friend."

Sister Drusia looked across the table at Brother Christopher, with a light of tender gratitude in her eyes, as if it were to him she owed thanks for this defense of Brother Laurence.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE PROGRESS OF LOVE

Give all to love;
Obey the heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse,
Nothing refuse.

EMERSON.

Upon the following day Hugh, Otho Rapp and Great Peter were husking corn in the riverside barn. The short November afternoon was fading, and the silence and the chill of evening shadowed their spirits with a slight melancholy and a sense of weariness. Late events, the disappointing issue of the addition to the ranks of the Rappites, which had once appeared so desirable, the struggle with Count Theodor and his adherents, and, finally, the unaccountable fall of Brother Laurence, were the topics which they discussed with the inconclusive wonder and revolt of inexperience.

"You had always a great love for the schoolmaster, Hugh," Otho had said, and Hugh had flushed and answered hotly:

"And I love him still, and will believe no evil of him."

Otho looked away into the dusky corners of the barn, and said softly: "Yet it is possible to love and to believe evil at the same time."

"Not for me, Brother," Hugh answered.

"But one loves one's own in spite of faults."

"We Rappite boys have none that are our own," Hugh answered bitterly.

"But we have. You not, perhaps, because there is none of your blood here; but I have my own — I have my mother."

"Sister Gertrude Rapp? But — but she ——" Hugh did not finish what he was about to say. It was impossible to remind Otho that this woman, evangelist and saint, lived upon heights far above motherhood; but Otho understood.

"Yes, I know," he said; "yet always, since I was a little child, I have hoped, I have felt that her heart must turn to me. Mine has always, always waited for her love."

"She is too good a Rappite. It would be a weakness," Hugh urged.

Peter spoke quickly and angrily:

"God made her a mother. It is for her to love her son, and he is right that he will not blame her; he trusts her."

"But that is love," Otho asserted dreamily. "It has that quality. Respect, friendship, and admiration go when one is faulty; but love is different."

"'Tis not for Rappites," said Peter with a slight

bitterness of tone. "That Walter Vogt, who came with Count Theodor, said to me once that it was a miracle that human nature did not open our eyes and show us three that Sister Trillis, and Yetta, and poor little Elsie were beautiful and lovely. And so they are, but I never thought of them in the way he meant: nor did you, Brothers."

Otho and Hugh were silent. Unheeding, Peter continued:

"He told me also that Count Theodor loved Trillis, and would be coming back some day to marry her. Think you she would listen to such a thing?"

Otho thought, with indignation, that she would not; and Hugh, breaking the ear he was husking, hurled it violently against the wall, and, springing up, threw down his husking-gloves, and declared that he would work no more.

That night, when all the chamber floor of Number Two seemed rocking softly with the snoring of the brothers, Hugh stole down the stairs and out into the moonlit street. He went first to the river, and walked up and down there, thinking, thinking. Trillis' scruples and her determination to resist his power over her had piqued him, and aroused a resentment hitherto undeveloped in him. He had kept aloof in order to punish her, meaning to yield in good time to her pleadings for reconciliation. But while Trillis held out with a resolution he had not expected, the rush of events at Harmonie, new excitements and new

responsibilities, had filled his thoughts to the exclusion of the estrangement between them. But now, when the strenuous days were over, and life was returning to its old monotony, he was seized with doubts and fears. If another loved Trillis, was it impossible that Trillis might respond to that love?

What Otho had said of love that condones and trusts kept recurring to him, but more often came the bit of gossip that Great Peter had repeated. He did not for a moment question Count Theodor's love for Trillis,— he only wondered that he had not known of it himself. A hundred corroborative incidents came into his memory, and he was tortured with jealousy. Frightened at the length of the estrangement, and fearing that he had risked too much in it, he insensibly drifted toward the schoolmaster's house.

It was dark and silent, reminding him of sorrow and death. The little corner room upon the garden side was Trillis'. He pictured her sleeping in the narrow white bed, her form indistinctly outlined by the white quilts, her face gleaming from the aureole of her dark hair. He saw her with closed eyes and silent lips, all the color, the sparkle, and the warmth of life quenched in this cold sleep. He shuddered at the picture he had conjured, and involuntarily called her name. There was a slight stir at the window, and he saw something dimly white against the darkness of the room. The latch clicked, the casement

opened, and a voice charged with wonder and a tremulous delight floated down to him:

"Hugh! Hugh!"

"Come down, Trillis. Come down to me."

She hesitated, then leaning out, she whispered:

"I will come."

But the wind was sharp, and she had not dressed herself warmly. Although he did not touch her, he knew that she shivered, and he was distressed.

"I should not have brought you from your warm bed on such a night. But I had not felt the cold. Must I go away?"

"No. We can go around to the front door. There was a fire in the living-room at bedtime. Only we must be very quiet."

They slipped in and found the room still warm, the embers on the hearth making a little heart of light in the darkness. There was an oak bench in the corner upon which they found a knitted blanket. Hugh wrapped it around Trillis, inclosing her arms, and tucking in the ends with a little laugh.

"There! you are warm and safe as a bundle of cloth from the store," he said.

Then he seated himself beside her, and it was time to say why he had come to her; but this was not easy. Knowing himself at fault, he could not admit that he was. Trillis, divining his embarrassment, relieved him by saying;

"How strange that you came just then! I had

been dreaming that we were lost together in the swamp, where it was dark, and slimy things crept over us. Ugh! And when I awoke I could not believe it was a dream, and I went to the window to look and assure myself,— and you were there."

"I could not sleep, I was so unhappy!" His voice was full of distress; it melted her instantly.

"Oh, don't," she murmured, "don't be unhappy! I can not let you be unhappy."

"Then you are not angry with me?"

"No, no, I never have been. It was only——"

"Don't let us go back to all that, sweetheart. Let us just be happy. See, I do as you wished, although I see no reason for it. I have not even touched your hand."

She did not confess that, from the moment she had descended to him in the garden, she had felt this omission with a strange, inconsistent misery. She settled back into the corner of the bench, still swathed in the blanket, and Hugh drew nearer that they might whisper together. There was no further reference to their estrangement or the claims of conscience, and an hour passed very happily. By the end of it the embers had faded upon the hearth, and the room had darkened. Hugh unwrapped the blanket.

"I can not let you keep it all to yourself," he said, "for I am cold, too." And moving still nearer he drew it around them both.

Trillis made no objection; the impression Ulrica

had made, and the fears which it had excited no longer troubled her. This was Hugh, her friend, her playmate, and she smilingly remembered how in their childhood, one rainy day upon the island, they had built a wigwam in the wood and had nestled together inside it, wrapped like this in an old quilt. Perhaps they had loved each other then without knowing it.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE FUGITIVES

Oh, weary are the paths of earth and hard!
And living hearts alone are ours to guard,
At least begrudge not to the sore distraught
The reverent silence of our pitying thought.
Life, too, is sacred, and he best forgives
Who says, "He errs, but"— tenderly — "he lives."

MARY MAPES DODGE.

When the vagabond and swashbuckler mounted too high in Brother Hanno's spirit he found outlet in the woods. Game was plentiful; he was a famous hunter, and was sure to return, after a few days of tramping and killing, chastened and tractable. One morning Sister Brunhild, while tidying his sleeping-room at Number Three, found a note pinned upon the pillow.

"I go to hunt. I will return when I choose.

BAND-MASTER TAUFFÉ."

The laconic message smacked of rebellion; the signature declared it boldly. Poor Sister Brunhild turned pale as she read, then furtively thrust it into her bosom, where it lay for a good hour, gnawing at her conscience as viciously as the Spartan boy's fox.

She told herself it was her duty to take it straight to Father Rapp, but how was she to do that? Father Rapp was a disciplinarian of much vigor and little sympathy. He would certainly resent the fact that Hanno had left the village without permission, and the insolent note would add immeasurably to his anger, which she shrank from bringing upon the head of the sinner. But her conscience was even tenderer than her heart, and she was finally forced by it to carry the note to Father Rapp.

"Father," she said tremulously, "I am so sorry, but — but Brother Hanno has gone to hunt."

"Why are you sorry?" he said sharply, turning and fixing a piercing glance upon her agitated face. The quick suspicion of his tone escaped her, since she was not thinking of herself at all, but only intent upon saving Hanno.

"I am sorry because you will be angry with him. He went between the days. But, Father, he has a soldier's high spirit; it could ill brook the asking leave, especially if he had eaten something that did not agree, and he was — was very cross indeed, as he often is."

"Why should you excuse him? What is that in your hand?"

It was the note, and she offered it with trembling. Her heart beat in her throat while she awaited the dread explosion of his wrath. An explosion of hearty laughter came instead as he leaned back in his chair

and gave himself up to the pleasure he found in the message.

"Ah, Band-master," he chuckled; "the Old One dies hard in thee!" Sister Brunhild stood aghast. Was this the stern lawgiver whose will no man dared resist?

"But Father, I thought — I thought —" she faltered, hanging her head and fingering her apron. He looked at her again with sudden attention.

"When did you find this note, Sister?"

The color left her face, and she looked up with the eyes of a startled doe.

"O Father! I — kept it back."

"Why, Brunhild?"

She did not answer, but flushed painfully, and turned away her eyes. He studied her face a moment, then said kindly:

"It had been better had you come at once, Sister. But trouble yourself no further. As for Hanno, contention is the breath of his nostrils. He would be much cast down, I doubt not, could he know that I have laughed rather than raged at his rebellion."

The remark evinced the perspicacity of this leader of men. Brother Hanno all day long hugged the thought of George Rapp's anger, rehearsing all the insolent things he meant to say when the reckoning should come, upon his return to Harmonie. Meantime he found freedom sweet and rejoiced in it. Three times since morning he had stopped be-

side a spring or watercourse, had lighted a fire by striking a flint with his hunting knife and igniting a handful of tow and dried twigs with the sparks that flew from it. Once he had roasted a pair of young squirrels, once, a quail, and later, a pheasant; and after each of these hunter's meals had slept for a little upon the slope of some grassy hill.

In the late afternoon, trailing wearily through the denser forests, he followed the sound of waters and came upon a little creek, winding through a natural meadow on its way to the Wabash. The trees were sparse and wide-spreading, the grass was like velvet, and there was a narrow path worn by the small hoofs of deer. The hunter knew that sooner or later there would be quaffers at the stream, and he hid in the grass to await them.

It was not long before, looking forth, he saw a stag coming along the path.

Hanno, though he had slain many such, panted with excitement as the stately creature came stepping daintily, his head lifted, and his bright eye and distended nostril questioning the earth and the air. Once or twice he hesitated, as if suspicious; and, standing thus, with the sun and the shadows dappling his creamy coat, his great antlers lifted, and all his body tense and alert, he was a sight to enjoy. The old hunter enjoyed it to the last instant, then, lifting his gun with the heathenish adjuration, "To the mark, to the mark, good ball!" he laid the magnificent

creature low in the path. The weeds that bordered it were tossed violently by the stag's convulsions and, presently, the yellow haunches and the antlers heaved into sight again as the deer struggled to reach the water, where he fell and lay half-submerged, at the margin of the creek.

Brother Hanno ran excitedly down the slope and, eager to enjoy his triumph, he grasped the antlers to pull his prey out of the water. His hands had scarcely closed around them when the whole body of the stag thrilled at his touch, and, in an instant, deer and man were engaged in a mortal struggle. The brink of the creek was slippery under Hanno's feet, and more than once he was almost down in the ooze, holding the murderous prongs of the antlers away from him by exhausting effort. Fortunately the musket ball had partly paralyzed the hind-quarters of the deer, who could not, therefore, keep himself erect, but continually sank back upon them, compelled to wage the battle with his powerful shoulders and head.

Brother Hanno clung to the horns for life; his gun upon the bank and his hunting-knife at his belt were equally useless; there was no hope for him save in his power to endure until the loss of blood should gradually waste the strength of the wounded animal. There were moments when he felt the frantic struggles of his antagonist grow fainter, and other moments when its strength seemed to be renewed from some

secret source, and the man's heart failed within him. It is said that in the stress of danger one may have many thoughts, but this was not the case with Hanno. His mind was only intent upon the struggle, upon keeping his footing in the treacherous ooze of the creek edge, upon lasting out the failing strength of the deer. He was not conscious of the silence, the sunshine, the woods that shut in this scene of action, nor even of his loneliness in the hour of mortal danger. He was therefore scarce startled when a human voice called out to him:

"Drown him, Brother, drown him in the mud!"

But he caught the meaning of the cry, and, at the moment when the deer lowered his head in the effort to throw him from his feet, Brother Hanno exerted all his strength and bore it downward, burying the nostrils in the mud. He held it there until the great body quivered in the death throe, and collapsed at last in the muddied stream.

When he was free to drag himself to the grass and lie there panting, the man who had given the timely warning approached timidly and bent over him. Opening his eyes Brother Hanno saw, white and haggard, unkempt and inexpressibly sorrowful, the fugitive schoolmaster of Harmonie, who, finding himself recognized, turned and seemed about to flee into the woods. Hanno caught him by the skirts of his coat, and asked:

"How came you here, Brother?"

Brother Laurence looked around fearfully, but did not answer.

"Why are you here, so far from Harmonie?" Hanno insisted.

"I — I have come a long way; I am not of the community, I am an outcast." The words burst from him in a wail.

Hanno sat up, pulled the other down beside him, and with a shy tenderness slipped his arm around his shoulders.

"You are no outcast, Brother. They will find the money, and all will be well."

Brother Laurence drew away from him, and asked in a voice of alarm and sorrow:

"Have they guessed — O my God! tell me that they have not found it!"

Hanno began to think his companion mad, and answered soothingly:

"No, they have not found it. I will take you back home, Brother." Again his words, meant to calm, seemed to alarm.

"Oh, no! Not there!" he cried, "I was but passing by. I do not go to Harmonie; no, never again. They would hiss at me."

Brother Hanno had the quick and delicate intuition of many testy natures. He could not understand, but he could feel Brother Laurence's agony of mind, so he gently led his thoughts into other channels, and had soon produced in him a childlike trust

and dependence. That night they supped (Brother Laurence with ravenous hunger) on the venison, and made their bed in the forest. By the next day Hanno had decoyed his companion to within a few miles of the island, and on the next had ensconced him there in the Daventry mansion, which happened to be uninhabited at that time.

The schoolmaster had wandered far, suffered and hungered, and was too feeble to protest against Hanno's plans. After receiving the promise that no other member of the community should visit the island while he remained upon it, he accepted the situation, falling into a kind of stupor of weariness and grief. Hanno was much pleased with the secrecy which Laurence desired and Father Rapp permitted. He watched the approach to the island with the eye of a captain of a fortress. He went to the village only after night, slipping furtively along in the shadows of the bank, or even leaving the island from the other side and approaching Harmonie as if from Illinois.

His childish nature found infinite zest in this play, and he ran a hundred risks of exposure from mere boyish bravado. He would fire his gun over the head of some lonely brother mending fence in the bottoms, or tease a party of wood-choppers with strange groans and cries, and, while they searched in vain for the source of them, would lie in a thicket, choking upon his own laughter.

But most he loved to steal into the village at night

and to play boyish pranks upon the sisters. Eery noises were heard at the windows of the rooming-house where they were gathered to peel apples or to cut pumpkins for drying; strange shapes flitted around those who passed through the village streets at night. The sisters who washed linen at the river-side were frightened by unknown tracks in the sand, and by mysterious, blood-curdling howls like the cry of no animal of which they had any knowledge.

Poor Sister Brunhild heard a tapping at her window one night, and found a little tablet of birch-bark ornamented with a design of interlaced hearts lying upon the sill. She did not shriek, as he had expected, but stood looking at it in an attitude suggestive of pathos. The yellow candle-light illumined her face with startling clearness, revealing so much that was saintly and yet womanly, that Hanno drew back into the shadows with a pang at his careless old heart. And, when he saw her hide his gift in her bosom, the sense of her starved womanhood and the hard conditions of her life which forbade her to have sentimental secrets, and left her no place to hide them, no spot of privacy in joy or sorrow, overwhelmed him, and he turned away sobered and repentant.

Late terrific rains had swollen all the tributaries of the Wabash and mightily increased its volume, shutting off the island from chance travelers, and Father Rapp saw to it that there was no intrusion from the village. So the two old men lived in the desired se-

crecy, and in idyllic comfort, with plenty of wood for the great fireplaces and plenty of game for their larder.

Brother Laurence would give no account of the journey he had made, and mention of the missing money would shake him as a reed is shaken by the wind. Hanno learned to fear the effect of any allusion to the community or its interests, and carefully avoided the subject. But when his companion grew daily weaker and at last took to his bed altogether, he was forced to speak out.

"A still tongue gets no favors, Brother, and I will ask you boldly, what am I to do? You grow weaker, and I am alone; I must have some one from Harmonie to share my care of you."

"Not — not Father Rapp!" the sick man cried in alarm.

"Not, if you say not. Name some other, then."

Brother Laurence pondered long; then, with a sigh that seemed to mark the surrender at the end of some inward struggle, he said:

"Let it be Hugh, if he will come."

When Hanno went to the village to summon him, he might have gone boldly through the streets, for the wind was too sharp for any one to stir outside who needed not; but the zest of the trip lay in slipping cautiously across lots and keeping himself excited by a number of false alarms. At Number Four he ran upon two women with a lantern. They

were Sister Elizabeth and Sister Mary, come out to be assured that the chicken-coops were fastened against night prowlers. He risked his secret by groaning from behind the ash-hopper.

"What was that?" cried Sister Mary shrilly, grasping Sister Elizabeth's arm in her terror.

Sister Elizabeth did not pause to answer. She broke away from the trembling hand, and, being lean and light, fled up the garden walk, swinging the lantern in great arcs that threatened to extinguish it, and leaving her heavier companion to follow shrieking. By the time the household was aroused, and the garden was dotted with finger-shaded candles and tin lanterns, the old trickster reached the darkness of Father Rapp's garden, and gave himself the relief of a few moments upon a bench, where he held his sides and rocked back and forth in an agony of suppressed laughter.

Father Rapp blanched when he heard that Brother Laurence had sent for Hugh, and dismissed Hanno hastily to fetch him. Many troubled thoughts and fears attacked him while he awaited their return. The request seemed to indicate that the life of Laurence von Korassel was waning. He knew that Laurence could not be constantly with Hugh at this time of bodily and mental weakness without revealing secrets that were important to the welfare of the community. His heart sickened at the prevision of the loss of his early and beloved friend, but the anxieties

of his position as leader of the Harmonists gave him little time for grief.

And how would the revelation affect Hugh? The boy was suddenly become a man, he had lately assumed responsibilities beyond his age and a corresponding independence of character. He was more than fulfilling all that had been hoped of him, developing with every day the qualities of leadership. The thing he was to learn from Laurence von Korassel's lips might bind him the closer to Harmonie and its interests, or it might destroy his loyalty, and sever his connection with them as by a blow.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE CHOICE

No lonely, unblest future waiteth now,
Dear Love, for thee and me!

MARIETTA HOLLEY.

But Hugh was not at his lodging. Fate had been busy elsewhere than on the island that day. Advancing and receding, yet all the while making progress — as the spring does — the love that was to mold the fate of Hugh and Trillis developed in the events that followed each other so rapidly at this time. The freedom of association, which was general after the arrival of Count Theodor von Korassel and his companions, had secretly ripened it, until, from a shy, peeping plant, it had become mighty enough to overshadow scruples and habits of a much longer growth. Though neither Hugh nor Trillis had consciously listened to the doctrines of the new-comers, the substance of them had inevitably found lodging in their minds. Love had been openly discussed, happiness had been proclaimed as the proper end of human endeavor, and all the serious, self-sacrificing teachings of Father Rapp flouted as unnecessary asceticism. Men and women charmed each other openly in the

streets of Harmonie; warm glances were exchanged in mills and workshops; little gallantries, suggestive laughter, secret understandings, and furtive meetings, had taken place as if they were a natural and essential part of life.

Had the revelation of their mutual attraction come six months before, the whole force of habit and example, with the austere principles of this celibate community, would have been arrayed against it, and might have conquered it. Now, circumstances fought on the side of passion.

Hugh, though actually some five or six years older than Trillis, was much behind her in emotional development. Had he loved a simpler girl, one who would have been incapable of vitalizing the experience with the wealth of sentiment and imagination that Trillis threw into it, his feeling might have been as easily extinguished as the first love of any other healthy-minded boy. Even as it was, his goddess had often to furnish the fire with which he worshiped her.

As for her, as is oftener the case with woman than with man, love permitted no other interest. Whatever challenged her attention or attempted to share her consciousness with the thought of Hugh filled her with impatience. She had loved to spin, and had spent many happy hours pacing back and forth to the music of her wheel and her own singing. But spinning had become a burden, the wheel made discords with her voice, and its monotonous whir was

as irritating as the buzz of insects on a stifling summer day.

She had loved to play upon Father Rapp's harpsichord, pouring out her soul in rich notes thrilling with all her youthful happiness; now she felt her voice would strike too deep a note, and all that was in her heart would certainly rush out and betray her. The plumule can not resist the warmth that finds it in the seed, the rose can not remain a bud; it was inevitable that the time must come when the longing to give expression to this new force mounting within her, to bestow all the wealth of her being upon Hugh because she loved him, should prove too strong.

They met often now without danger of discovery from the older Rappites, absorbed in the calamities that had befallen the community, and busy with the preparations for winter that recent events had interrupted and delayed. Upon the day before Brother Hanno's visit to the village in search of Hugh they had met in the Temple of Harmonie, not by appointment, but by one of those accidents that go far to prove theories of spiritual communion.

Of all places the labyrinth in a chill November rain was the least likely to attract visitors; yet in the early afternoon Trillis, coming out of the fir-tree walk, found Hugh climbing the hill from the opposite side. They rushed together with light, triumphant laughter.

"What brought you here, Trillis?"

"How did you know I was coming, Hugh?"

"I did not. Something drew my feet, and did not prevent them from going out, either." She looked down at the great muddy boots.

"Come inside, where it is dry — oh, I hope I haven't made you take a cold!"

"How could you be to blame? You did not tell me to meet you here."

"No, but I made you come!"

The Temple of Harmonie was a characteristic representation of Rappite mysticism. Rude without, in order to typify the difficulties and privations through which the human soul arrives at the highest things, it was finished within like a Greek temple. It was circular, with white columns standing in a gleaming row, and a white dome swelling upward to a central source of mellow light. The floor was paved with white stone, and in the center of it, with the light striking full upon it, and drawing from it a whiteness to which all the rest was shadow, brooded a marble figure of Silence, with serene face and great wings half-unfurled. The head drooped, and a finger upon the lips awed and soothed the beholder. Upon the base was an inscription in German: "Be still, and know that I am God."

The beauty and stillness of the Temple and the majesty of the angelic figure silenced for a moment their young gaiety. It would seem that conscience might forbid a tryst of secret love in such a place.

But there is, in innocent and natural young hearts, a guide stronger than convention-nurtured conscience; Hugh and Trillis had obeyed nature, and she took the direction of their conduct. Though they felt the influence of the Temple and its guardian figure, in a momentary hesitation, their spirits soon recovered from it. More, they took the beauty and the silence as the right of love, and felt as if the Temple were the proper shrine for their worship of this strange sweet force that made life a rapture.

They sat side by side upon one of the white benches against the wall. Presently Trillis' hand stole along until Hugh's met and clasped it; while rain fell outside, and the wind soughed through the trees of the labyrinth, they lost themselves in the ecstasy of loving. The afternoon went swiftly, and the darkening of the Temple warned them they must return to the village. Awaking as from a dream, Trillis drew back in Hugh's arms and her voice was a wail of fear.

"Oh!" she cried, "I shall die if you cease to love me." It was the first doubt she had ever harbored.

"But I shall not. I shall love you more than ever," he said with careless confidence.

"But you might tire of me! You might think it wicked ——"

"Wicked? Don't we love each other? Why, I have never tried so hard to be good in all my life as I have since I knew you loved me. I never knew

how bad I was until I began to think of your goodness."

"O Hugh! Then we have had the same thoughts, for I do nothing but think how I can be worthy of you!"

The dripping of the slow rain upon the Temple roof, the soughing of the winds in the trees of the labyrinth, the damp gloom gathering within the Temple contributed to the exhaustion of feeling. The happiness that had flashed out in nonsense at their meeting dissolved itself in wistful melancholy. Trillis, seeking comfort for the oppression that had overtaken her spirit, pleaded again for the assurance of continued love.

"Are you sure, Hugh, that nothing will make a difference in your love?"

"Don't think of such things, Trillis, they make you look too sad. Your mouth is not half so sweet when your lips are pale and drawn like that."

Trillis could restore the Cupid's bow of her mouth, but she could not recall the innocent confidence any more than she could bring back the red to her lips to please the lover's eye that had become critical.

That night she reached the definite point when childhood and girlhood have ceased; she could not sleep. When feeling can upset the established habits of a healthy body, and can rob it of a span's forgetfulness to add to the lease of care, the real business of living has begun.

In the darkness and loneliness of the night the conventionalities of a race laid hold upon her mind. She had little conception of family life from experience or observation. To her, if the prejudices are really formed by these, the celibate life, the grouping of men and women in lodging-houses, and the absence of personal privacy should have seemed the natural way of living. From all she had been taught it should have seemed also the rational and the moral way; but one's experience is not comprised in the span of individual existence. Trillis' experience consisted also in the convictions of a long line of wife-loving fathers and home-making, husband-loving mothers. The maidens of her race had looked forward to marriage as the real end of living. It had meant to them independence, dignity, opportunity, the apotheosis of woman. She shared their feeling by heredity; she felt through it the basic meaning of marriage, the protection and shelter that make it to woman and her offspring the most important of all human institutions. No wonder that woman surrounds it with sentiment and ceremony that seem meaningless and even onerous to man, but are more than creeds and governments to her.

Trillis, helpless in the toils of a passion to which it had been so easy and natural to yield, which had appeared an ecstasy and suddenly revealed the lineaments of remorse and sorrow, instinctively recognized marriage as her refuge and justification, — the only

tenure by which she might continue to hold love and happiness.

The next morning she went to the weaving-room, and bent pale and heavy-eyed over her work in a far-off corner. This was one of the industries under Hugh's superintendence, and she knew he would visit the place during the day.

The weaving-shop was a large bright room, being the entire floor of one of the few log houses retained by the Harmonists. It had broad windows and whitewashed walls and a general air of cheer. The looms and their oaken benches were the only furniture, aside from the great webs of vari-colored cloth and the hanks of bright yarns that hung from racks along the walls. Every loom or shelf had its blooming plant, and a couple of chairs and a music rack at the end of the room awaited Brother Hanno and Brother Otho, who frequently brought their fiddles to enliven the toil of the weavers.

When Hugh entered, all the rosy, healthy faces turned eagerly to welcome him, for he was clearly the darling of all these dear old foster-mothers, and might well have been spoiled by the attentions they showered upon him. He found the work excellent, and he passed from loom to loom to tell the weavers so personally. He had a pleasant sense of manliness here, the effect of responsibility, and he impressed it upon Trillis when he stopped and pointed out a flaw in her pattern.

"You are working in too much of the black," he said, looking at her saddened face with disapproval. "Weave the bright colors in more freely, Sister," he added, with authoritative significance. The tears welled to her eyes, and she shrank from him.

"Come out into the air," he whispered, and went on to the next worker. She waited outside for some time before he appeared, a smile left from some old sister's adoring comment lingering about his lips.

How far away men seem sometimes from the morass into which Love is almost sure to lead and torment his bewildered feminine acolytes! Trillis felt that careless smile like a knife-thrust.

"If you will go over to dust the school-room, I will come in for ten minutes," he said, and swung on down the street with a grace and strength that she felt she could never equal again.

The school-room was deserted now; there had been no child at Harmonie for a long time, and since Brother Laurence went away it had not been opened at all. As Trillis was living now with Sister Bena in the schoolmaster's house, there was nothing to excite comment in a housewifely visit to this room.

Hugh came up through the great cellar and surprised her lying with her head upon a dusty desk. He kissed her with the perfunctoriness of assured love, and bade her smile, because he loved her most when she was gay.

"But I can not feel as I did, Hugh, until you

have promised me something — something I should not be the one to ask. It is you who should ask me to marry you," she said tremulously.

"Trillis, will you marry me?"

"Yes."

The solemnity of her tone startled him.

"Why do you speak of that?" he asked. "Why do you want to be married?"

"Because it is right — because — oh, I do not know! Hugh, do not you want to be married, too?"

"It is a serious matter. Have you thought out all that it will mean? We must leave Harmonie and all our friends, and go out into the world and live among strangers and ungodly people."

"Yes; but you said that to be with me made you want to be good; surely, living together as husbands and wives do in the world, we should be able to keep each other from temptation."

"But would it not be wrong to leave these people who have brought us up? It would be like ingratitude and desertion, for Father Rapp would never permit us to go; we should have to run away."

"Hugh, can you weigh the claims of other people with my right in you?" she asked hotly, feeling that right for the first time. "Am I not more to you than any one else?"

Her flash of spirit pleased him more than the meek melancholy of her late mood; and he smiled and answered as if there were no reservations in his mind.

"Where shall we go? How can we get away? How have you planned it?"

Trillis' plans were indefinite; but Hugh, having consented, put his practical mind and his knowledge of the country to work upon the problem. There was no reason for delay, and it turned out that when Brother Hanno came that night to take Hugh to the island he did not find him, because he and Trillis had run away to be married.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE MARRIAGE

It's we two, it's we two for aye,
All the world and we two, and Heaven be our stay!
Like a laverock in the lift, sing, O bonny bride!
All the world was Adam once with Eve by his side,
What's the world, my lass, my love! What can it do?
I am thine and thou art mine; life is sweet and new.

JEAN INGELOW.

The day's work began early at Harmonie, but it had its pleasant interruptions. At nine o'clock a lunch of bread and cider was served, there was an hour for dinner at noon, and the work was done in time for *vesperbrod*, which was spread at five in the afternoon. Such notable cooks as Sister Brunhild and Sister Margreta made the simple repast of bread and butter and preserved fruits, with little cakes and wine, a delight that no one would willingly miss. This was the hour chosen by Hugh and Trillis for their elopement. It was easy to fill a basket with a variety of the delicacies spread in the pantries, and the light sweet wines of their own manufacture, which were always free to the Rappites, who were, withal, a temperate people.

With this provision, and a small bundle of clothing

packed in one of the long baskets shaped like an oriole's nest which were made by Sister Lanie in great numbers, Trillis waited for Hugh at the turn of the road leading to Vincennes. The horses he brought were her property, sprung of the racing stock bred by her ancestors in old Virginia.

"I am glad you thought of my horses; it looks less like stealing," she said.

He set his lips and answered grimly:

"It is exactly like stealing, nevertheless."

"Oh, you feel it is wrong! Perhaps we would do better to go back."

For answer he swung her to the saddle, and, mounting the other horse, rode before her into the highway.

When one is young one has an inordinate appetite for experience; and this was experience of the rarest flavor. The bitter taste of deceit and ingratitude was soon gone, and they took their adventure with zest. Naturally, they were chiefly interested in making plans for the future; not anxiously, and with an undercurrent of doubt, as must be the case with young people, however sanguine, who have been reared in the struggle which arises out of normal economic conditions, but as innocent of the universal world-curse of care as if they were from fairy-land where all things come by the waving of a wand. This they owed to the Rappites, and were, without knowing it, one of the few young pairs that ever went to the

mating unafraid, and unconscious of the specter of want that lurks in the shadow of marriage.

Hugh, full of mechanical ambitions, in the vanguard, by nature, of the age of invention then dawning upon the world, had some difficulty in choosing the particular city in which to begin his triumph. Trillis, with some half-conscious desire to atone for deserting the Rappites, preferred to return and settle upon the island, to farm her lands, and to be good neighbors to them.

"Think how lovely it will be," she urged, "to have the sisters visit us; and I can show them all my pretty things — bought things — from cities. And they will be so interested in everything! They have not seen two people living together alone in a house for so long; and in spite of themselves they will love to see it, and to know that we are happy. Oh, I can hardly wait!"

"You do not think, then, that they will be angry with us?" he asked.

"Yes, Father Rapp will be, and Sister Bena, because he is. But the others — I believe they will think in their hearts that we are right. Besides, many of them were married when they were young, although I can not understand how anything, even religion, could make them give each other up. I think they must have loved, and, if they did, they know that we could not help ourselves. Hugh, I believe there are people at Harmonie who are beginning

to lose hope of the early coming of Christ. You see, when they gave up husbands and children they thought He might appear at any moment; but now that the years have gone by, and He has not come, they wonder if they may not have been mistaken in that, too. No, there will be few who in their hearts will condemn us for loving and marrying."

"If I thought," said Hugh wistfully, "that it would ever be like that with Father Rapp, I should feel we ought not to go on. If he is to wait and wait, and to grow old and helpless, as some of the brothers are, and the thing he looks for comes not, and he is lonely and sad, and feels that God has forsaken him —— But I will not believe it! God chose him. He is doing great things at Harmonie, and he will live to welcome Christ, and to sit at His right hand in the New Jerusalem."

The melancholy thought passed in the utterance, and with it all consideration of irrelevant affairs; for these two young people were riding toward their ideal of the highest earthly happiness, and could not spend the precious moments of anticipation upon the affairs of others.

The sky was lowering, and a chill wind was gathering force in the west. The short gloomy day was drawing fast to its close and, to the eye of comfort-loving middle age, a fireside with the aroma of a warm meal in the nostrils were far sweeter than young romance in this weather; but Trillis and Hugh, if

they thought at all of their surroundings, extracted a charm from the contrast of gloom without and bliss within. For now that all other ties were severed and they were bound for a new life, their hearts counted not the odds at all, but beat with a joyous lightness that augured well for the future.

"Hugh, you must tell me now, before we are married, why you love me," said Trillis, riding close to him and speaking with pretended authority.

"I don't know — unless it is because you are a girl," he answered, with masculine indifference to the psychology of love.

"That can not be the reason; the world is full of girls," she replied.

"But you are not like any one of them."

"No. Now we are coming at the question; perhaps, if you will tell me how I differ from them, I shall find out what I want to know."

"It is not because you differ from other girls, but because you differ from me," he explained, uninterested, but patient.

The man accepts love without analysis; the woman too often tears her rosebud open in order to see how the leaves are folded. Trillis was of this type. She would have liked to investigate further at this moment, but detecting the impatience under the patience, she relapsed into nonsense.

"I wish it were the other way — that you were the girl, and I the man. I would know exactly what

to do. I should know very well how to make you happy."

"But I do it, do I not? What would you do?"

"Ride close to your horse — like this; and snatch a kiss — like this!"

"If I were a girl, you would not need to snatch; I should be ready at any time."

"Yes; but you would not want me to act as if I knew it! Girls don't care to be taken for granted. I should understand them so well — if I were the man — that I should always snatch the kisses, just as if I were very kiss-hungry, in the first place, and dare not ask for fear of a refusal."

"If you were the man, you would snatch kisses. What else would you do that you can not do now?"

"Oh, I should be telling you how I love you — every minute."

"But would not I — as the girl — get tired? You see I would know you did, anyway."

"No, you would not! A girl can not know; things are changing every minute, and men are the worst of all things for that!"

"How many men do you know, Trillis?"

"Oh, every one at Harmonie." He laughed at her limited experience; she bridled and defended it.

"There are many kinds of men there, and some have been lovers. Even Father Rapp — he must have been a glorious one — so tender, and easy to please, so firm and masterful!"

"So am I easy to please, and I am willing to be masterful — only, I will tell you, for you are sure to find it out — I am a little bit afraid of you. You are not so meek as you should be."

"A husband should make his wife meek, if she is not so to begin with," she said sententiously.

"Could not you just be meek of yourself? It would relieve me."

"I could not, now that we have talked about it. It will be my duty to be meek, and it will also be yours to make me meek. It seems, too, that it is mine now to make you make me meek."

"I shall begin. Stop your horse and kiss me."

"Catch me first!" She dashed down the road in the twilight. Captain threw up his head and started to race after his mother, but Hugh held him down to the leisurely pace they had been traveling. Five minutes later he came upon Trillis waiting beside the road.

"Why did you not come after the — kiss?" she asked tremulously.

"I told you to kiss me, and there was no hurry."

"Yes, there is, take it now!"

"There will be time enough and kisses in plenty after we are married."

"Hugh!" The tone was unmistakable, so he leaned over and kissed her.

"O dear," he said, "I don't see how I am ever to master such a girl as you are, Trillis!"

The night came down upon this lovers' nonsense, and with the night a fine, chill rain. They were well wrapped in the woolens of Harmonie, which were fine and thick, well fulled and seasoned, as it were, to weathers, but a November rain is penetrating, and they suffered from it. An hour or so of plashing through it gave their experience, hitherto so joyous, a somber tinge.

"It does not look possible to go on to Vincennes to-night," said Hugh.

"Oh, we must! I am afraid if we do not, something will happen, and we shall never be married at all!"

"Nothing could happen to prevent! We might stop at some cabin and be comfortable until morning."

"Comfortable? I don't see how you can think of being comfortable when you have started out to be married!"

"But, Trillis, we should only be delayed until morning, while keeping on in this weather may make you ill."

"That is just it! Something might happen — I might die or you might change — O Hugh! I can't stop anywhere! You would feel just as I do, if you were a woman!"

For another hour they rode, silently, since the wind had risen and drowned their voices. Presently, above the crash of boughs and the plash of hoofs, the

wind bore them snatches of a strange music. As they went on it took the tones of a human voice, singing somewhere ahead of them. Later the tune and some of the words came to them,

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,"

sounding out of the darkness and the storm, in a full organ-like tone, and thrilling them strangely; it was a warm human hand leading them on. A turn in the road brought to view a log church in a clearing, every blindless window of which was aglow with light.

"O Hugh! We must stop; we must get warm again!" Trillis cried.

When Hugh knocked upon the door it was opened by a thick-set, dark man; and it showed a fireplace in which a huge backlog and a worthy company of foresticks were making a most gorgeous spectacle of flame and shadow. The man assured them they could come in; he also was a traveler who had found the road impossible in the storm. He had remembered this church which, because it had once been a dwelling, had a fireplace, and he had found the wood heaped upon the hearth.

"The ravens have not yet provided supper," he said, with heavy jocularity, "unless you have brought it." To which Hugh replied that they had done so.

The man was stocky, and showed the strength of the pioneer; his head was large and exceedingly broad

at the top, though the cheeks and neck were thin. His features were fine and strong, his expression saturnine. His manner was brusk and carried the suggestion of a natural refinement which he seemed to suppress or to hide.

He looked searchingly at Hugh, and when Trillis had unwrapped her dark head and showed her soft girlish features framed in clinging curls, the oval cheeks, white now, and the eyes sunken in the purple shadows of fatigue, he looked at her severely.

"Is she your sister?" he asked Hugh, pointing deferentially backward with his thumb.

"No," Hugh answered, hesitating to say more. "No, we are travelers like yourself. Since it is not your house, I do not feel obliged to give any further account of our affairs."

"But it is my house, young man, in a way," the other said in a tone of quiet authority. "This is a Methodist church, and I travel this circuit."

"Still, you will allow us to take refuge here from the storm? You will see that my — my companion is very much worn out."

"Yes, but young persons like you would be better at home with your parents at such an hour on such a night."

"We have none. But we have some supper. Come, join us, and try not to distrust us."

Hugh's cordial manner melted the austere preacher. He belonged to a profession that cultivates both aus-

terity and joviality, sometimes in the same hill, as this particular member of it would have said. He threw off his air of disapproval like a garment, and put on a pleasant old-world courtesy in its place. Trillis spread the feast and smiled a welcome. They sat sociably before the beautiful fire and ate such delectable bread and cakes and pinkish ham as excited the preacher's wonder beyond repression.

"I don't want to be too curious, especially when my young brother here has such a cool way of turning off questions, but I did not think there was a Hoosier woman alive who could make a sweetcake fit to eat! And, as for the bread that I get on my rounds, I believe they take the text about bread being the staff of life in a sense that enjoins them to make it as much like wood as they can."

Trillis laughed. "I made the bread myself," she said.

"And the sweetcakes?"

"No, a much finer woman made those."

"I can't believe you, Miss." He arose and made her a bow, charming in its graceful deference, though Trillis flushed under the teasing glance that accompanied it.

"Oh, but she is! She weighs two hundred pounds!"

"And can cook like this? Who is she? She does not live in my circuit."

"She is not far out of it," said Trillis, with a

desire to tease a little in return. "But she is no Methodist."

"Is she married? I'm a bachelor myself and in the market."

She looked at him appraisingly.

"I think you are too large. I am sorry, sir."

"You made the bread, you say, perhaps ——" He looked at her questioningly, and all her face and neck burned with blushes.

"Oh, I — I am — I ——"

The preacher smiled with an open-heartedness he had not shown before.

"You are bespoke, I guess. Are you worthy of her, young man?" he asked Hugh seriously.

"I don't know — nobody could be!"

"When are you going to marry?"

Hugh made a clean breast of it.

"We were on our way to Vincennes; we want to be married as soon as we can."

"You are running away from your parents?"

"We have no parents; we are Rappites from the community at Harmonie. We have been brought up to think marriage wrong, but we couldn't help loving each other."

The preacher chuckled with a quiet enjoyment, his manner warming toward them.

"Well, I'm glad you had the spunk to defy that old cold-blooded Rapp!"

"But you do not know him!" cried Trillis, with

generous defense of the friend they were on the eve of deserting. "He is most kind! He does not know we care for each other like this. We love him."

"Why did not you tell him and remain quietly at Harmonie and be married?" the preacher asked coolly; then answered himself: "Of course you dared not let him know. Oh, I know what an old tyrant he is! He must kind o' charm you folks like a snake. They say you don't any of you ever question his will. I'd like to marry you myself, just to spite him!"

Hugh and Trillis exchanged glances. The arraignment of Father Rapp had aroused some dislike of the preacher in the girl's mind, but even this short experience of contact with the outside world had taught her something of conventionalities. She saw more clearly than before the advantage of marriage. Hugh read her eager face.

"Would you marry us?" he asked, his voice trembling a little with the imminence of responsibilities that suddenly loomed great upon his mind.

"Yes, I could. You could get your license after; it is sometimes done in new countries. But I wonder if you sense the responsibilities of your undertaking? Marriage is holy; it is also lasting."

"We know that," answered Trillis; "and we can help each other to be good."

The preacher started, his cold gray eyes filled with tears.

"My child, you have the very heart of the thing!

If that is what marriage means — and it is — I have missed much. If I had had some one to help me be good, I should have made a better job of it. See here, young man, I am going to marry you two, right off; not for her sake, for yours. Something might happen between here and Vincennes and you would miss the finest thing that life will ever offer you — and God help you to deserve it!"

Trillis arose and stood beside Hugh. The wind moaned round the log church, the rain dashed fiercely at the windows, but the great fire burned steadily and glorified the rude interior and spread a sort of cheer over the empty benches. The storm and the night typified the fears and sorrows of life; the fire, that warm and vital force which makes a safe and sweet retreat within the radius of its influence for any who will feed its flame.

When the itinerant had pronounced the solemn and simple ceremony and the two were man and wife, they sat down and kept a long silence; then Trillis' hand stole along the bench. At its touch Hugh's closed over it, and, in that instant, his love underwent transmutation. From a mere boy's passion, that any woman might have plucked and worn, it became a strong sense of duty, a defense, a service. It was the budding of that feeling which is of more value to the wife and the family than a thousand passions, though they deck themselves with all the glories of sentiment.

"I have been careless and selfish, Trillis; I will be good to you." He kissed her hand reverently, and she looked up and smiled her supreme content.

The preacher was pacing the aisles. His hands were clasped behind him, his hat was pushed to the back of his large head, and his feet came down with a quick precision. The man was as methodical, as relentless, as sharp and definite as his footfall. This marriage stirred in him sentiments that had long been inactive. He had known a girl with just that full yet modest swell of a woman's figure, and that delicate, palpitant color in her oval cheek. Once he had touched just such a dark and shining ringlet, and it had curled round his finger in a caress he remembered still. He came near the fire again.

"Why not fix your wife a place to lie down on one of the benches?" he asked Hugh. "She is very tired."

He took Trillis' great shawl that had been drying by the fire, and himself spread a couch for her. She lay a long time in a blissful reverie, watching Hugh from under her heavy eyelids. The preacher had changed his beat to the front of the church and came near them no more.

Hugh had chosen the bench behind her, and now and then leaned over to look at her, filling her heart each time with a rush of feeling that made her forget her weariness. He loved her, and she was his wife; she would fall asleep always, hereafter, near him, and wake to find her happiness a reality.

And, while Trillis lay brooding thus, floating waves of joy seemed to come to Hugh from her pale, happy face and her half-defined figure, supine in the folds of the shawl. A nameless, sweet expectation divided his heart with reverence and darting fears that made him withdraw his gaze from her with an overwhelming sense of unworthiness. The words of the marriage service kept returning to him, full of admonition and divine authority. Young, careless, intent upon the joy of life, and seeking that hitherto through sensation only, his soul aspired and grew with each recalling of those sacred and pregnant words.

Manhood with its obligations loomed great before him, and all that was fine and strong within him seemed rising to meet it with exultant ease. Beyond the beautiful face and figure, with their feminine charm, he saw, to-night, into the heart of womanhood, and all the tenderness, the sacrifice, the affection which blesses the husband from the wife, spread its promise over his future. He had found his mate, the completion of his being, the purpose of living, and the stimulus to endeavor; he felt it all in swift sharp waves of revelation. He could not wrap himself in joy, and muse as Trillis did; the surging tide in his veins, the riotous forces of young love, drove him to action; he paced the little church, and more than once went outside and let the keen, rain-burdened blast cool his hot face. But not for long.

Always he returned to Trillis, and saw her again with a new thrill of reverent joy.

At midnight the storm abated, and the preacher bade Hugh farewell, with some strong and manly words of admonition and encouragement. Trillis, had she been awake to hear, would have treasured them in her memory as sacred mementoes of this holy hour; but Hugh's own thoughts were sounding such deep and reverberant notes that he scarcely heard the man, although he followed him to the door, and waited there, from the habit of courtesy, until he rode away into the darkness.

When Hugh had closed the door again, and faced the little church with its firelit interior, enshrining in its warmth and glow the presence of his wife and the sacrament of marriage, his boyhood dropped from him like a garment. He leaned against the door, his heart shrinking, and he trembled with mortal cowardice. The child in him seemed to plead for an instant, to hold him to the careless joy and irresponsibility of youth; but when Trillis lifted her dark head in the illumination from the glowing hearth, and, half in fright and half in tenderness, called, "Hugh!" his soul sprang up at a bound, and took possession of life and its responsibilities with joyous confidence.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE SACRIFICE

O hath it come to duty now!
Duty, that grey ash of a burnt-out fire,
That lies between a woman and a man!

STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

When Brother Hanno reported that he had not been able to find Hugh at his lodging, nor in the village, Father Rapp had a sudden clear conception of the whole situation.

"Did you find Trillis?" The question leaped from his lips of itself.

"No. Geerusalem! Do you think ——"

"I was wrong to ask that question. She is asleep in her bed, of course. You have not heard anything? Nor seen anything between them?"

"I can't say that I have not, and I will not say that I have. She's as fine as they make women, and the boy has eyes."

"But he would not do a low thing ——"

"Everybody don't agree with you that marrying is low, Father; though you have tried it, and I have not, as the fox said to the buzzard who complained

of his dinner. Ah, well! Love is not learned of a schoolmaster, and youth is ever in a hurry."

"We are talking nonsense. But I will see if Trillis is at home."

It required no little diplomacy to get Brother Hanno off to the island without having fathomed the depths of this startling mystery. But at last George Rapp saw his lantern's light swinging in the blackness of the other shore, and was free to begin his search. At the school-house Sister Bena was placidly knitting lace for window curtains when he came in with his face of concern, asking for Trillis. Some bond between her and George Rapp — the power of entering instantly into his thought — enlightened her at once.

"She went to spend the night with Yetta at Number Four. But what is wrong?"

"Have you seen anything wrong?"

"Do you mean Hugh? No, I have not; but ——"

"He can not be found. Brother Hanno has searched the village. Have you ever suspected — do you think?"

She was very pale by this time, and a hundred suspicious incidents flashed into her mind — unheeded circumstances that should have warned her.

"She has been in my care," she said humbly; "and I have been blind!"

"It was not natural," said he soothingly, "that you should suspect them of such a thing."

The quick red flashed over her face, and she lifted her eyes with a spark in them.

"I do not consider they have done anything very wicked in loving each other," she said stiffly.

It was his turn to flush, not in anger, but chagrin at having blundered upon an expression which had stirred their own sleeping secret.

"Perhaps it is not true. I will go to Number Four and, if she is there, I will come back and tell you. Go to the island in the morning and see Brother Laurence; you will be able to make yourself welcome to him, — you have always the power of getting your way with people."

His tone and smile were a request for forgiveness.

"I will go, but is there a special reason?"

"Yes; his acknowledgment of Hugh at this time, his illness and claim upon his filial duty, may bring the boy back to the community when other things fail."

"Will you try to do that? You promised me Hugh should be free to leave it when he was old enough to choose."

"Bena, have I no claim? Is all my work to go for naught? The economical future of the community is in Hugh's hands. He has been trained for it, and there is no other man here fit to guide it. With his business ability and his mechanical gift he can bring Harmonie to be a power in the world! Bena, think what this means to me. Besides, he is but a boy; what

would he do in the world? Here he will become a great man and be the instrument of great power."

Sister Bena had her own views of the value of happiness compared with greatness, and there was in her heart an insistent sympathy for Trillis, who must be sacrificed; but George Rapp's ambitions and desires far outweighed other considerations with her. She agreed to waive her claim for Hugh's freedom, and Father Rapp went to Number Four, to learn that Trillis had not been there.

There was no longer any doubt as to what had happened, and shortly after midnight he set out to follow the fugitives to Vincennes.

The hoofs of his horse and the wheels of the chaise obliterated or changed the tracks of the horses ridden by Trillis and Hugh, and George Rapp bore a heart heavy with anxiety along the road, where, had he senses fine enough, he might have detected the delicate aroma of sentiment still lingering in the air, since the love-making of the happy pair had been the last human influence to charge it.

On and on he went, while the storm gradually calmed to a steady November rain, and the darkness gradually paled to a somber November dawn. Few incidents of the journey, not even the lighting of the east and the final presence of day, impressed him. For a long time a faint music throbbed in the outer chambers of his consciousness, but gradually a sense of harmony and his habitual joy in it awoke his at-

tention. From the distance a voice, deep and resonant as the tone of an organ, sounded more and more distinctly until the words of a hymn were plainly audible:

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is found for your faith in His excellent word!"

George Rapp's music-loving soul was thrilled to the core.

Presently, from the cross-road, a horseman, wrapped in a dark shawl and still pouring out his marvelous song, approached. George Rapp drew rein.

"Friend," he said, as the singer stopped beside the chaise, "let me rejoice with you at the goodness of God. That voice is a glorious gift!"

The rider took off his hat and bowed his head.

"I thank Him for it, and I use it in His service."

"You are a preacher?"

"Yes, Brother; and have put sinners under conviction who were half a mile away from the pulpit."

"I do not doubt it. You are, I think, a Methodist itinerant?"

"I am. I think you are yourself a preacher; it is in the twist of your tongue."

"I am one who, because he would exercise that member in preaching the gospel in Germany, was persecuted and driven into exile. I am George Rapp, of Harmonie."

The preacher was not surprised; had there been

no peculiarity of dress to betray him, Father Rapp's fine face, his expression mingling the conscious force of the leader with the fire of the enthusiast, must have marked him as a man of consequence. The other looked him over coolly. The leader of the strange sect at Harmonie was not approved by the preachers of any denomination in that new country, where each of them fought his rivals of the cloth as vigorously as he fought the devil. A little spark of malice lighted in his gray eyes.

"Well, Mr. Rapp," he said, "I think I have done you an ill turn with this voice of mine; I married a couple of your disciples a few hours ago."

George Rapp was able to conceal his chagrin and anger, and asked calmly:

"Where did the wedding take place? Who were the witnesses?"

"It took place in a church. I was one witness, the bride and groom were others, and God the fourth. It is a bond He forbids any man to put asunder."

"Where is the church?"

"At the crossing of the Vincennes road. I left them there some time ago."

George Rapp took courteous leave of the preacher, concealing his chagrin at the marriage in an indifferent manner and leisurely pace, but when the horseman had passed out of sight he dashed over the road in desperate haste to reach the little church before the fugitives should leave it for Vincennes.

It was almost noon when he arrived. Hugh had procured corn for the horses, and eggs, potatoes, and milk for themselves at the nearest farm; and Trillis was preparing a meal over the coals on the hearth. In his absence she had adorned herself with a few articles of finery that had belonged to Madam Daventry. There was a high comb with a golden top, there were bracelets and a chain of beautiful workmanship, and a wide collar of fine old lace. She wore the costume of the German peasant woman only slightly modified by the Rappite taste. The material of her dress was a fine woolen cloth, richly blue, and soft enough to fall in folds an artist would have loved. The skirt was very full, not long, and trimmed in rows of broad blue ribbon. The bodice was laced with cord over what was called an "under-body" of deep red wool, the low round neck and hanging sleeves showing a full chemisette and undersleeves of white linen. It was withal a most beautiful costume when it clothed a fine, vigorous, feminine figure and was crowned by a graceful head and vivacious young face.

Trillis, gathering her dark curls into a graceful knot with the golden comb, and fastening the lace fichu about her shoulders with a pin of seed pearls and filigree, waited, a bride adorned for her husband.

Hugh caught at once the significance of this worldly apparel; it seemed to mark, even more definitely than the marriage ceremony, their separation from

the Rappites and their entry into the world. He looked at her with admiring eyes, and it was in a very atmosphere of Paradise — for a woman — that she busied herself with the meal which was to be only the beginning of that blissful domestic life from which they expected so much.

When George Rapp opened the door of the church, Trillis was bending over the coals, flushed and smiling; Hugh was leaning back against the wall, watching her in husbandly leisure, gloating on every deft, womanly movement with a full sense of possession. His entrance froze them like statues, and he had a sharp pang of pity at seeing them retain the attitudes of their happiness while their faces were stricken white with sudden terror.

Had there been less at stake than the welfare of Harmonie and the religious principle it represented, he must have turned back at that moment and have left them to realize their dream. As it was, he came slowly forward, searching his mind for words that might be final and yet merciful.

"My son," he said, addressing Hugh, "why did not you tell me what you meant to do? I should have prevented it."

"You could not have prevented it, Father; but I should have told you," Hugh answered between defiance and conciliation.

"You do not know what you have done — how much is at stake. You could not have realized what

a blow your marriage is to the community and all its interests!"

"We loved each other," Hugh answered; "and we felt it right to be married. There was a preacher here ——"

"Yes, I know; I met him."

"We are sorry to hurt you, Father, — indeed we are not ungrateful, and we want to come back and live on the island and be good neighbors to you and to all the brothers and sisters."

Trillis said this, stroking his sleeve in a pretty affectionate way that had won him many times when she was a child. He looked down at her now in a painful abstraction. He wished he might deal only with Hugh and the interests of Harmonie without the added complication of this orphan girl and her happiness.

"Father, Trillis has prepared a dinner for us; let us sit down and break bread together for the first of many, many times, for we hope to be forgiven and to be always your friends. Of course, we can not go back to the community, but we can be dear to each other still."

Hugh's assumption of the host and his quiet dominance of the situation fired Trillis with a new feeling of wifely pride. How sweet it was to have put her life into the hands of one who was capable of controlling circumstance and justifying her dependence! She began to spread the meal, and the glow on her

cheek and the light in her eye showed she felt her happiness secure.

"Trillis, do you know what Hugh is to Harmonie?"

She answered the abrupt question with a sinking heart: "I know he was very useful."

"The whole future of the community depends upon him!"

She winced and sent a frightened, inquiring glance to her husband. He was as startled as herself, but not so credulous.

"You overrate me, Father," he said; "surely there are several who can take my place."

"Will you name one?"

"But," said Trillis, "we shall live near you; Hugh can still look after the mills, if you need him."

"Think, Daughter, what will be said in the world. The youngest member of promise withdraws from the community to live on his own lands. Will that not be taken as proof that our economical ideas and the holding of property in common are a failure? Two of our members whom we have trained from childhood repudiate celibacy, the very foundation of our creed of sacrifice and devotion, that they may live together in marriage. Do you not see how the poison will spread; how you two have given the death blow to Harmonie?"

"I can not see it so," said Hugh; but his tone had more of sadness than conviction.

"The very faith upon which our community is founded is shaken by what you have done. We gave up individual interests and family ties in order to be free of carnal things, and to give up our lives to the making ready for the Second Coming of Christ. Yet you, whom we have trained in that faith, make so little of it that you sacrifice it without hesitation for the gratification of carnal affection. How can we prepare the world for His advent when we can not make it believe that His coming is near? And how can we spread a belief of which we show ourselves uncertain? What concern have you, who have been taught to expect Him at any hour, with marrying and multiplying? And when He is come what are you to say, who have put His teachings to shame that you might begin a new home and a new generation, as if the world were to endure for ever?"

Trillis had sunk upon a bench, and her trembling fingers pulled mechanically at the clasps of her bracelets until they sprang open and fell from her wrists.

"Father —" Hugh spoke with a humility that made her heart quake. Was he, then, less sure of his ground?

"Father, whatever I have done about the mills and the shops I could continue to do, if we lived on the island. The community need not suffer that kind of loss by our marriage."

"You might do that for a while, until your own interests weaned you from us. But we should miss

the real purpose for which God gave you to us." Father Rapp was looking now at Trillis, divining that his appeal would go to the very heart of the wife's pride in her husband.

"You were born for leadership; you can attract and control men. You have the power to organize events and circumstances and to read their meanings. It is not meet, Daughter, that Hugh should see too clearly what gifts he has, but you can see. Why is it so easy for him to understand the machinery and the processes of trades, except that he may oversee the labors of just such a community where many trades go on at once? Why was he given the things that we most need in a leader and sent to us, but that he might do the work for which he is fitted?"

Trillis had not even in her adoration counted Hugh's gifts so highly; but could she be behind another in appreciation of them? She saw by this time that his choice must lie between herself and the community; and never had she seen the community as so great a thing, — the effort to regenerate society, the evangel of a new faith, the potential kingdom of God upon earth! Her claim upon him, her hunger for happiness, were small when measured by such large ideas.

Hugh had much the same feeling. Just as last night, after their vows were spoken, he had had sight of the seriousness of his relation to Trillis and could see it spreading widely, in unthought-of directions,

so now his obligation to the community loomed upon his apprehension, tremendous, threatening, and reaching further than he dared to follow.

"We did not consider these things; we thought only that we loved each other and would spend our lives together as husband and wife," he said musingly.

"Oh, Father, we only wanted to be happy!" Trillis cried in mournful echo of his thoughts.

"You would not have been. The community would have crumbled before your eyes and you would have awakened to your responsibility for it. Your happiness was only a dream that could not last."

"I can not think that," she said, with some of her old spirit; "our happiness was real."

"Then it is the nobler sacrifice."

"Sacrifice?" she repeated inquiringly, and looked at Hugh with startled eyes.

"It is what others have done for the love of Christ and the furthering of His kingdom," Father Rapp replied. "Many of the brothers and sisters came from Germany as husbands and wives, bound together by years of mutual experience, sorrows, and joys, and with children to draw them closer; and yet they voluntarily severed the marriage tie and have lived apart for years in the service of the Lord."

Trillis' thoughts went back to many things of which she had not until now gathered the full significance. She remembered seeing Brother Martin stand behind

the great doors at the church entrance, as if he were hiding there, while Sister Christine, who had been his wife, passed by so close that her dress brushed his shoes. How strangely eager was the look he had fixed upon her! His eyes burned in the darkness of his hiding-place like fires, and he had sighed when she was gone. And she knew, now, why Sister Ermengarde knitted always a special pattern into the socks and mittens for Brother Malthus, and no other copied it; and why Sister Lanie had slipped out in the night and had gone to the burying-ground after Brother Peter Lutz had been laid in it, last spring. Many such significant instances crowded upon her recollection, and she saw, for the first time, the heartache and the starving affections that lay under the surface of their apparently contented life at Harmonie.

"Do you think it our duty to dissolve our marriage as they did?" she asked, looking neither at Father Rapp nor at Hugh.

"It is certainly your duty. I should like to help you to do it gladly, in the true spirit of sacrifice, so that it may be a blessing upon you both."

Hugh roused himself. He had not the feminine predilection for martyrdom, and some points in Father Rapp's argument rang false in his ears.

"I can not consent to repudiate our marriage. It is a sacrament, a vow before God; it is not to be broken."

Trillis had unfastened the pearl brooch,— the bracelets were already returned to the basket. At these strong words from Hugh her heart swung like a pendulum back to the claims of love and wifehood. And here was that for which a woman will barter the largest ideal — Heaven itself, if need be — a manful will upon which she can lean and laugh at chance and fate, since it can conquer both for her. She drew the lace together and refastened the brooch.

"What you say would be true for any one outside the community," Father Rapp answered him. "God has not heard your vow, because it is contrary to the things you have been taught as to His purposes for man. Many of them you have had by direct revelation. Do you think He will excuse you as if you were ignorant?"

Trillis hung breathless upon Hugh's reply. It came in a cry:

"I can not break her heart, though I burn in hell for it for ever!"

She ran toward him with outstretched hands.

"You shall not suffer for my sake, Hugh! We will give each other up; we will go back and do our duty. Christ will reward you when He comes!"

When she was near enough to touch him she paused, trembling. Her fingers, clutching at her bosom, found the little brooch and the lace; she took them off, and, turning back to her place, took off the comb also, and put her bridal ornaments quietly away.

The simple act was a devastating abnegation. When it was done she was a Rappite woman, and her life was empty.

Hugh, watching her and understanding, was angered by the finality of her act. He turned upon Father Rapp with flashing eyes.

"Why is it," he cried, "that you require so much? A man's property, his lifelong labor, the very thoughts of his heart will not content you. You must have also the sweetest and holiest relations of his life!"

George Rapp was of a hasty temper, and he was tired. It is likely, too, that his sympathies as a man had been at war with his ambitions as a leader throughout this interview.

"You should have gone with Count Theodor," he said; "unless you think it a greater duty to nurse your dying father, and to make up to the community the loss and disgrace that have come upon it through him!"

"I have no father."

"Brother Laurence is your father."

Of course. Had he not always known it, in the depths of his being?

"Where is he?" he asked, in complete acceptance of the relation.

"He is on the island, very ill; Brother Hanno is tending him, and he came last night to fetch you at your father's request."

All the facts took sequence in Hugh's mind. His father loved him, then, and claimed his duty and his protection from the suspicion and blame of his fellow communists.

"Why did I not know I had a father?" he asked.

"Brother Laurence would not permit it; he was suffering, and I think it was his nature to hide it."

"And my mother?"

"She was killed one night in a storm."

Hugh blanched. Dim old whispered tales came back to him, and, sick at heart, he asked with trembling lips:

"She was Sister Leah, the apostate?"

The years had softened George Rapp's judgment of her. The gleam of bright hair in the ruins of the Temple, the little pleading, futile, upturned hand, came back upon his memory. He looked at her son, and a great wave of pity for the dead woman overcame his harshness.

"She was very young,— let God judge her. She was not truly of us. She was your father's second wife, not Theodor's mother. She was an American, of an ambitious and worldly generation, and much petted by her friends. She did not understand Laurence's high nature. She seemed for a while to be truly converted to the beliefs of the Harmonists, but it was a delusion; the enemy of souls enticed her and she died in her sins."

"My father brought a woman who was not fitted

for this life here, against her own wishes. He compelled her to give up her child and finally herself, to the community, and when she died he refused to claim me, and he brought me up in ignorance of my mother?"

"Such is our use, as you know. Why should your father have claimed you more than the other fathers their sons? You have been brought up as others were. But you have not your father's devotional spirit; you will be led astray by the same feelings that ruined your mother. Do you not fear the wrath of God?"

Hugh, bewildered and sore with shame and anger, temporized:

"My father was found beside the labyrinth wall,—was he not also breaking the laws of Harmonie, or did he lay the blame upon my mother?" he asked bitterly.

"Yes, he blamed her; she enticed him into the Temple, and she tempted him to break his vows. It was in fleeing from her blandishments that he became bewildered, lost his way in the storm, and, falling over the wall, struck his head upon a stone and lay unconscious until morning. God had dealt with your mother, and he confessed his sin and I forgave his disloyalty. You have no real ground for reproaching your father."

"No! Only that I have been lonely and hungry for a father's love all my life. I have loved him,

without knowing, though my heart must have known. This is what your community has done for me!" he cried bitterly. "I needed my father; he should have claimed me!"

"Your father claims you now, and he needs you," Father Rapp remarked quietly, but with firm directness of manner.

Trillis had tied her scarlet hood about a face that was ghastly in the aureole of brilliant color, and, wrapped in her shawl, was ready to return to Harmonie.

"You must go to your father," she said, looking past Hugh into the dying fire.

"Yes, I must go to my father," he echoed, and dared not look at her.

Father Rapp, having conquered, could easily return to his normal manner and habits.

"I have come a long way, and without a breakfast," he said with simplicity. "It would be a pity to leave good food and to ride fasting into such weather."

Trillis sat down and watched, with a woman's wondering scorn, the appetite with which Father Rapp, and even Hugh, ate the food she had prepared for their wedding feast. The experience gave her a certain power of self-control, so that, until Hugh had ridden out of sight, she preserved a dignity of demeanor, as if what had befallen her was right and natural.

When she sat beside Father Rapp in the chaise, retracing the road that shrieked its tender memories as she went, it was no longer possible to curb her agony. And if Father Rapp looked haggard and broken when he reached the village, it was because he had forgotten all higher interests in mere human pity for her.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE PARTED WAYS

The world in which we live and move
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love;
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy; — and were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismayed,
Beyond his passions' widest range,
Far regions of eternal change.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Trillis Daventry had the elasticity of life when it is new. Sorrow had burst upon her like a tempest; when the shock of it had passed, all the forces of her being became active to revive and restore that which had been injured or destroyed.

For one devastating night she held herself face to face with what had happened; for one interminable day thereafter she admitted only the thought of her sorrow to her mind. The second night brought the sleep of physical exhaustion; upon the second day she sometimes wondered whether it were she or another who had been cast off. After that, her grief hid itself, lying in wait, it is true, to spring upon and tear her at unexpected moments; but between

these attacks there were intervals of normal, hopeful life, when, with the elasticity of healthy youth, she diligently sought some interest with which to arm herself against the lurking sorrow. She went at last to Sister Gertrude Rapp for it.

In this woman all the passion, all the hope, the tenderness, the fluctuation of feeling which is the pulse of the human spirit, had centered upon religion. It was as if her whole intellectual and emotional life had been diverted from natural courses into this one channel. She moved among her fellow communists in a sweet alienation that awed them. She was subject to intense fervors of religious feeling; a text from the Bible, a chance allusion to death or immortality, could make her thrill and palpitate, could awaken her beautiful, still features to the play of quick emotions; but her friends might have dropped about her, and the whole fabric of her material existence might have crumbled, without causing one tremor in her placid countenance, one quickened heart-throb or a single tear.

Trillis envied this impersonal attitude, and was willing to go with her into the region of abstraction and exaltation, where pain could not follow. Gertrude Rapp, perhaps because she guessed the nature of the girl's sorrow, and pitied a grief whose pangs she herself had known, exerted all her power to drown it in a religious fervor like her own.

Though many elements had entered into the ab-

negation of her marriage, Trillis could honestly feel that a sense of religious duty was one. It was easy, therefore, for a woman of great natural magnetism, reinforced by years of concentration upon one train of thought, to influence her enthusiastic nature when more normal sources of happiness had failed her. From that mixture of influences with motives, which accounts for most of the changes and all the growth of human souls, Trillis turned from sorrow to religion.

Women kept modestly in the background of life at Harmonie; but her youth, her fervor, and some touch of personal ambition from ancestors who had always taken a part in life, made it unnatural that she should stay there, and with Father Rapp's countenance, she was soon in the full light of publicity, at least in the spiritual life of the community. He hailed this change in her with pleasure and gratitude. The thought of witnessing her daily suffering had haunted him since that agonizing drive from the little Methodist church back to Harmonie; and now she had found the only comfort for love denied that has ever been acceptable to good women. He, therefore, encouraged her to take a part in the religious services, and gave her responsibilities and a prominence not hitherto permitted to her sex, not even to Gertrude Rapp, who had a far greater evangelistic gift.

Brother Laurence's presence on the island had long been suspected, and now that his relation to Hugh was acknowledged, the old men recalled that moment

years ago, when, carrying him from the meadow where Brother Hanno had found him, they had met that startling procession of the sisters bearing his dead wife from the garden. The picture stood out now, in the light of recent events, with full dramatic significance. They described it all again and again to one another; they were absorbed in the romance of that old story, and with its sequel in the final claiming of Hugh — their pride — by this father, who had ignored the paternal tie through all these years, to acknowledge it now that he himself was broken in health and branded with shame.

Without this situation to claim their lively interest, it is likely that some one would have discovered the elopement and marriage, for Harmonie had its social ferrets and gossips. As it was, Brother Hanno alone nursed suspicion upon the subject; but the return of the fugitives to the village had been so adroitly managed by Father Rapp that he had little upon which to feed it.

Hugh shut himself up with his father, and it was easy to account for his heaviness of spirit by the shadow which lay upon the parentage and the name so recently discovered to be his. He refused to go into the village, and Brother Laurence would admit no visitor from it but Sister Bena. Brother Hanno had, therefore, the congenial task of gathering the news of the community, and bringing it home to cheer the dreary evenings in the sick-room.

Hugh could not always conceal his interest in this gossip, and sly old Brother Hanno learned to stimulate it by frequent mention of Trillis. He attended every service in which she took part, and developed surprising power of remembering and reporting what she had said. Hugh listened to these accounts with an angry heart. All the natural man in him, the savage instinct of possession, the desire to seclude the woman he loved from the eyes and interest of all others, rebelled at this change in her. Was she not his? Yea, though he had given her up! Did she not owe it to him to withdraw herself from life, to devote herself to thoughts of him, to keep herself sacred to the memory of having been his wife?

These thoughts drove him, at last, to the village. It was a Sabbath morning, soft and gray. Already the precocious spring of southern Indiana was pushing winter from the stage, though it was but the middle of February. When he came into the church after the others were seated, every head turned and every face brightened with welcome. Was he not the pride of all their hearts, so strong, so handsome, and manly, so full of fellowship, and that quick, shrewd sense for business which even the religious nature of their organization had not belittled to them? This morning there was a common impulse to show Hugh that Brother Laurence's guilt, if he were guilty, could not affect his own position in the community.

Hugh, preoccupied with curiosity and bitterness, gave little heed to their kind looks. Had he reflected upon his popularity at all, it would have been to hate it as the very obligation that had separated him from Trillis.

His eyes sought her, and his heart sank when he found her in a seat of prominence near the pulpit. It was not his Trillis who sat so calm, so sure of herself, among the elders. The oval of her cheek was white, but not, he felt, because the color had fled from it. It was the pallor of some still cold region where the thought of him did not follow.

Her voice, when she sang, seemed to have undergone the same subtle change; it soared into sublimated melodies that had nothing to do with love. When she arose to take her part in the service, he felt the shock of another change. This was not the Trillis of the restless, darting, girlish figure, and the vivid changing face; it was some ripened, self-poised woman who had gone beyond him in thought and experience.

She poured out her soul to him, seeking to share the spiritual fervors which had comforted her, and her words surged around him without touching his understanding. But as she went on, the spirit of her discourse gradually overcame his anger. The full musical voice, the swelling bosom and eloquent hands, the glowing eyes, and the generous warmth of temperament that made her magnetic, worked their spell

upon him. The bright optimism of her message — so different from the tone of ordinary Rappite preaching — had also its effect, and his resentment faded.

"Still," he said to himself, "her heart is not broken; she has not wasted with grief; she was never more vigorously beautiful than now. And I have wept like a school-boy many a night on the island, at the picture of Trillis, grieving and pining for me! I am not angry; I think I am somewhat amused. And why not relieved? If she can give me up so easily, why not accept the situation with a clear conscience, and throw myself into my life-work, free from the thought of any bond between us?"

The service over, he was now from this revulsion of feeling as eager to be welcomed as his brethren were to welcome him, and in each warm hand-clasp he felt he renewed a covenant with Harmonie and its interests. Every lodging-house claimed him for the midday meal, and while he was laughingly trying to adjust the conflicting invitations of the sisters at the head of each household, Trillis passed, on her way to the school-house.

"Here is Brother Hugh come back to us, Sister," one of the group cried to her; and she returned and held out her hand to him, with a sweet but impersonal smile. She was merely conquering a wild impulse to throw herself into his arms before them all; but — so densely can the flesh obscure the spirit — Hugh interpreted her self-control as lack of feeling, her

friendliness as a reminder that all other claims were forfeited. He smiled, dropped her hand quickly, and turned again to Sister Martha. Trillis went on, down the street, wondering if it were possible he had not heard the tumultuous beating of her heart.

The next evening Hugh came to the village to show Father Rapp the plans for a new carding-machine upon which he had been working in the long leisure of the island. George Rapp himself had no little mechanical genius, and the discussion of the projected machine lasted some time, and resulted in some modifications of Hugh's idea. While he was making these, Father Rapp leaned back in his chair, his own leonine head in the shadow, and studied the broad shoulders, the full brow and handsome face of his companion. Candles of various heights grouped around Hugh threw out his head in strong relief, and revealed the changes which late experience had wrought in the face. The old, soft, boyish look was gone, the contours were firmer, the mischievous, roving eyes had a new depth, and the mouth and chin, though still rounded and dimpled, were stern, and hinted at bitterness and doubt.

All these things were read and approved by the astute student of men, even while his heart ached for the boy whom he had loved to indulge; ached, and yet gave joyous welcome to the man, developing to fit the place in life for which he had chosen him.

"Hugh, you saw Trillis to-day?"

"Yes, Father," he replied, without looking up.

"She has borne the ordeal bravely; she has made her sacrifice willingly, and God has blessed her."

"She does not appear to pine, at any rate," was the bitter answer.

"No; for she has found her vocation. I spoke of her because I wished to open the future for you somewhat, and wanted first to be sure you were wholly free of the past."

Hugh was well acquainted with Father Rapp's methods of managing others, but it suited him, at this time, to accept the desired conclusion. His smile was in itself a question; but Father Rapp was not obliged to accept a smile as if it were speech, so he went on:

"I have always meant you should have a broader education than this country affords. When I was at your age I desired nothing so much as to be a student at a German university. Would you like it?"

The fire that leaped into Hugh's eye, the flush that dyed his cheek were in themselves an answer.

"I have thought of it, but I did not think it possible," he said.

"It seems necessary. Our trade is growing, our relations with the world widening. Our doctrines are necessary to the salvation of souls, but they spread slowly. We need to reach a better-educated class than we have yet been able to interest; we must have educated leaders in order to do it. Education, knowledge

of the world, is the one thing we lack; you must bring this back to us, Hugh, and with it make Harmonie a power in this new country."

When they parted that night Hugh made a boyish and characteristic request:

"Let me go without giving them a chance to make a fuss over me, Father. I couldn't bear to tell the sisters good-by and have them cry over me!"

George Rapp patted his shoulder.

"I understand, my boy; women dwell on their sorrows, tasting and measuring; we men swallow them down and get rid of them. These tearful good-bys are like chewing pills — a torture that could be escaped."

There were, therefore, no formal farewells. Even Brother Laurence, to the surprise of his housemates, was eager to have Hugh start at once.

Left alone in their secluded home, Brother Laurence and Brother Hanno dropped gratefully back into their former course of life; the one to pursue his childish pleasures and to indulge his vagabond tastes; the other, apparently, to spend his allotment of time in a dream, but in reality to live a fierce inner turmoil of shame and grief, which was rapidly destroying body and brain.

There could be few sharper contrasts than that between the life which Hugh had led at Harmonie and the one upon which he now entered at the University of Heidelberg. But the young seldom reflect upon

these things; the value of contrasts, the significance of varying experiences, does not occur to them. It is only the artist who studies the disposition of lights and shades in the landscape; it is only the philosophy of middle age that finds similar relative values in the events of life.

Hugh was one of those fortunate individuals who have the gift of youth, which, if it is not immortal, yet lasts beyond the tenure of ordinary mortals. It would be late ere he fell into habits of prevision and reflection. Many sorrows, labor and failure, can not quench the light of such spirits, in which Hope has always the last word. How, then, was this episode of marriage — it was no more to him, as yet — to shadow the bright prospect before him? It did not,— not, at least, beyond the sentimental gloom which is sometimes pleasant in the background of experience, and serves to set the present forth the more brilliantly.

The life at the University of Heidelberg was eminently suited to George Rapp's views for the future leader of Harmonie. Hugh carried into it a certain poise of character — the result of his half-authoritative position in the community — which enabled him to choose with a mature wisdom the knowledge most fitted to his gifts and need.

The associate life of the students seemed to broaden and carry further, in certain directions, the principles upon which the Rappites had builded; and his expe-

rience of the world widened in the direction of his early training.

He met in intimate daily relations the Rhinelander, the Hessian, the Swabian, the North-German and lads from the old Hanse towns,— young Germans from every section, each with his native idiosyncrasies, besides students from England, France, Spain, and other countries of Europe. This mingling with so many varieties of mankind was, in itself, the ideal culture for the future to which George Rapp had devoted him.

His good-fellowship, frankness and courage won him friends, and he became an eager participant in all the sports and antics of the light-hearted *Burschen,* the chief object of which was an outlet for high spirits and crowding energies.

The darling of all the sisters at Harmonie, accustomed all his life to the adoring service of women, it was inevitable that he should attract, even seek, feminine association. At the house of a widowed gentlewoman, to whom Father Rapp had recommended him on the score of an old friendship, he met a bevy of young girls, who were glad enough to coquet with the handsome American.

These maidens were the daughters of merchants and advocates, as well educated as any in Germany and pretty and interesting, according to natural bent, one being a lively hoiden, another as charmingly melancholy.

Hugh had not guessed the self-devotion, the real nobility of character that lay under Trillis' docile abnegation of their marriage. He attributed her conduct to a fickleness of nature of which, he told himself, he had had many intimations in the general lightness of her spirit. When some inward sense of a man's obligation to the woman who loves him made itself felt, in spite of his Rappite training, he excused himself on the ground that it had been only her ready yielding that had prevented him from making a stand for their rights in each other. Her immediate adoption of the spiritual life seemed to set them even more remote from each other than their agreement with Father Rapp, and he felt that she, herself, had made their separation final.

The German maidens found, therefore, no obstacles between them and his ready masculine heart, but a certain universality of taste that could not decide where each was so charming. There might have been also, though Hugh knew it not, a rivaling charm in the memory of Trillis, who was as handsome and bright, or as gentle and appealing, if she chose to be, as any of them.

And,— fortunate youth! — he had the benefits of an intimate association with them and paid no heartaches for it. If the maidens paid, what then? Are they not often losers in the game of love — and, come to think of it, of life as well?

Three years of student life went swiftly and hap-

pily; at the beginning of the fourth, Father Rapp sent him to Paris. The great Harmonist was able to introduce his ward to a circle of writers, dreamers, philosophers, and reformers, in which he made acquaintance with every new idea afloat there. In the first quarter of the century, new ideas were abundant in any city of Europe, but in the intellectual atmosphere of Paris they were as thick as motes in a dust-storm. The age of reason was slowly settling and forming soil for the age of action. Men had evolved the truth that unlimited power is destructive, even though it be the human reason that wields it. They were looking eagerly then for the very bonds that the eighteenth century had thrown away. Not able to mend these, and so to enchain themselves again with aristocracies and oppressions, they were busy forging new ones out of the old social organization.

The communistic idea was a universal favorite. Men saw in it the solution of all the problems of humanity, and they busied themselves in a search for the principles that should make it enduring. The commercial basis was soon recognized; and the community at Harmonie, being a notable example of it, was favorably known to all Europe. Hugh, as its representative, aroused the interest of politicians, writers, savants and workingmen.

This fact, while not conducive to that modesty which old men admire in young men, was perhaps the thing which saved Hugh to George Rapp and his

ideals. It gave a certain dignity to his future as well as to the present, and nullified the temptation of the freer life and more glittering opportunities which individualism offered him.

He did not waver in his allegiance to Harmonie, and returned thither at the end of the fourth year, eager to bestow upon her interests all he had acquired in his absence.

## CHAPTER XXV

### HUGH'S RETURN

Whereon he thought
"What an she hate me now?" I would not this,
"What an she love me still?" I would not that,
I know not what I would.

TENNYSON.

Hugh's associates in Paris had taught him to look upon America as the land where the hope of humanity was to come to the harvest. Hence, its new cities and rough countryside suffered nothing in his eyes in contrast with the memories of an older and richer civilization. He saw, beyond its sparse cabins, its dim roads and hard conditions, a rose-colored future, toward which he was riding in this early summer of the year 1824.

After the ordered fruitfulness of Germany and France he found the native flavor in the Hoosier landscape sweet, and reveled in its wild poetic charm; but he was no "nature lover" of the voluble school, and took no credit to himself for being responsive to weathers and the beauty which they created.

As he approached Harmonie, the breeze brought him the perfume of white locust blooms from the

shady streets, and a rise in the road showed him the village in its umbrageous valley. He stopped his horse and sat looking down. There, in that peaceful community, lay his life-work; and his heart swelled to think how great he meant to make it and how large in its results for humanity. It swelled also at the thought of the welcome awaiting him from the warm-hearted guardians of his childhood — seven hundred souls, of whose love and trust he felt himself secure! What son of individualism could boast such a wealth of affection?

On the heels of this exultant thought came the dread of change, which is the specter of returns after long absence. He should not find Elsie there, nor Brother Hans Baumgert, the old paralytic, nor the black and smiling face of Nicey, the old slave of Major Daventry. They were hidden somewhere in the unmarked graveyard,— the alien who had never swerved from her allegiance to the traditions of the slave-holding South, and who had scornfully measured the simple Rappites by them until her last hour, sleeping among them now in the peace of oblivion.

But there must be other changes than those death had wrought. Had Trillis changed? It would be interesting to know just what she thought — if she cared at all — about his return. He understood the marriage bond now as he had not done before, and knew how strongly it held even where it galled. He had learned, also, what happiness it could bring to

two who were equally yoked together. If theirs had been such a marriage, if they might have clung together in its sweet obligation, Trillis would be waiting for him now with a welcome that must surpass that of twice seven hundred others who were not his own!

He shook off the thought — it smelled of infidelity. Besides, Trillis had found something better than his love, a far nobler career than it could bring her, and one in which she was content. As for himself, he was glad to be free, to devote himself to Harmonie, and to work out the great question of social regeneration.

He started on again eagerly. He was not expected for another day, and was to have the boyish pleasure of surprising all his dear old friends. He turned into the lane leading past the labyrinth to the village, simply because he had been wont to find, at any season, something in it to enjoy. Its deep and fragrant seclusion was as charming as his memory of it. Trees of many kinds, growing in the rich profusion of that soil and climate, had grouped themselves as they chose, and were bound together by festoons of wild vines in which the delicate starry sprays of the "traveler's joy" contrasted with the dull oriental coloring of its cousin, the "leather-flower," or the rich trumpets of the tecoma.

A sandstone bluff rising abruptly in the way made a curve in the lane. The first face was sheer, beautified only by hanging vines and up-creeping mosses,

but the other gave forth a tiny, singing spring which had made a little paradise of verdure and seclusion about it.

Redbud trees, having found seed-hold in the crevices of the rock, struck root in it and clung to its sides like venturesome boys. In their shade a colony of moisture-loving plants made such a grateful resting-place that the lane had swung a wide arc in the clover field to accommodate it. The heart of this retreat was not visible to the foot passenger, but Hugh, from his elevation on horseback, might look over the wild roses to see if it remained as he remembered it.

When he stopped his horse he heard bursts of low laughter and a cooing as of doves, and saw in the very center of this sylvan retreat, where the sod was smooth and soft, a woman and a little child. The woman's gown was of the rich, familiar blue of the Rappites, and clung round a figure of distracting grace as she lay upon the turf, the broken sunshine dappling her with gold and lighting the rich glow in her dark hair. She supported herself slightly above the child, now brooding over it in adoring ecstasy or breaking in upon her own sweet reverie to tickle and caress the little naked body. A heap of linen by her side showed that she had undressed the little creature for this abandon of worship. It tossed its plump limbs on the warm velvet of the sod, laughed and chattered, evidently as happy as its companion.

WHEN HE STOPPED HIS HORSE, HE SAW, WHERE THE SOD WAS SMOOTH AND SOFT, A WOMAN AND A LITTLE CHILD *Page 342*

Hugh watched her pat the dainty arms and legs or stoop, with the quick motion of a diving bird, to mouth and kiss the soft breast and neck, uttering, all the while, a low sweet music of caressing words and rippling laughter.

The sight was in itself an appeal to any man, but struck to the deepest roots of feeling in this one's heart, for, could the lines of the figure and the small head crowned with its knot of dark curls have deceived him, there was still the voice to convince him that the woman was Trillis. His heart beat wildly, and some unexplained sorrow gripped his throat. It was as if some wave of her emotion had broken over him. He seemed to see under her apparent happiness some specter of pain; her very laughter, though it bubbled so lightly from her lips, had some hint of appeal, some haunting tenderness that rested upon grief.

He slipped to the ground and led his horse softly past the wild-rose screen. By the time he dared remount, his rather inexplicable feeling had given way to thought. The scene had not surprised him, exactly; for in all his memories of Trillis there was not one into which she fitted so naturally as this one. She had always been the most natural, the most normal of women; the love of children would have been, under ordinary circumstances, her ruling passion. As a mother —— And this child? Perhaps some immigrant's babe left for the moment in her care;

and she was capable of bestowing upon it more tenderness than an ordinary mother gives her own in a lifetime.

But the child and her relation to it were of small consequence to him. He had seen Trillis, the woman whose life was bound with his own in that passion which, though he had forsworn it, was yet of an alluring and vital interest to a young man fresh from the world in which it disputed empire with ambition, greed, and aspiration. True, it could not again touch him. His heart was steeled against it by far more desirable things; still, it was bound to come sometimes into his thoughts, and never without the memory of her. And she was beautiful; and her pretty fondling of the child proved she had not lost all her spontaneity, all her natural feeling, in spiritual experience, as Sister Gertrude Rapp had done.

For Hugh, with the ready decision of a young man, had formulated his views as to the character of Harmonie under his administration, and they ignored the spiritual factor upon which George Rapp and Hugh's father had builded it. He told himself that the little glow which the sight of Trillis had lighted in him was but a natural pleasure in finding her a normal woman, rather than the cold and shadowy creature he had sometimes feared she might have become through complete absorption in the exacting spiritual interests.

His arrival at the village was hailed with all the

hearty joy he had anticipated. The warm hand-clasps of the brothers and the greetings of the sisters, where smiles and tears were so tenderly mingled, were most sweet, and he found in them something that seemed to dedicate him to a higher responsibility in the community than he had yet conceived.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE NEW MEMBER

Fenced early in this cloistral round
Of reverie, of shade, of prayer.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

As Sister Bena and Sister Drusia grew older they harked back to the quiet, domestic life of the fatherland, and finally made request for a little house of their own, which they might keep together.

They were provided with a small house on the outskirts of the village. It was one of the older farm cottages, built of wood, and, after the Rappite fashion, with an end to the street and its entrance door on the side within the yard. Such houses were necessarily placed upon a corner; and this one, being removed from the center of the village, had the entire block to itself, with ample yard and garden. It was bounded on one side by the labyrinth, which gave long vistas of verdure and seclusion, and the shady lane leading from the river road to the town ran behind it.

The house had two stories, with three rooms in each; a small square entrance containing the stairway and the cellar door, a sunny, ample room that was

dining-room and kitchen and, next to the street, a long bright one with three windows looking out upon it. In the second story were three low-ceiled chambers with windows to every breeze. It was a large house for two persons, according to Rappite ideals, and both the gentle old sisters had a pride in the fact.

Having made the first concession to ancestral longings, they went further every day from the simple usages of the community. There were a few pieces of fine china and old silver in Sister Bena's oak chest, and when they had been set out as ornaments they made constant demands for companionship. So there were a picture of Martin Luther, a Bible bound in morocco, with trimmings of brass and mother-of-pearl, and a few delicate vases that Frederic Richardt had collected for them in the cities he visited as the commercial agent of the Rappites. To these things two pairs of old hands, well-skilled in the art of the needle, added curtains, rugs, table-covers, and the like, of most beautiful workmanship.

Sisters from the lodging-houses, whose ornament was chiefly a perfect cleanliness, loved to visit the little house and to finger the pretty trifles which appeal to the home-making instincts of all women. Now and then some ascetic brother chid them for their vanity; and poor, gentle, timid Sister Drusia had frequent twinges of conscience, during which she would have renounced every pretty thing in the house. But Sister Bena had a serene independence of character; as

long as she thought them harmless she was not in the least moved by the objections of others.

It was easy to reassure Sister Drusia, for a little while at a time; and the two lived very happily in their pretty home.

Early on the morning after Hugh's arrival at Harmonie he made his first visit to them; too early, as it proved, for he found them with windows up and all the pretty things covered from the dust. They had heard of his return and were making ready for him.

"Oh, we should have got up the earlier!" cried Sister Drusia in dismay. "You must not think we are not glad, but we are in such confusion. You will think us miserable housekeepers, when we were so anxious to have all in order for you."

"But the house is as neat as a house can be, Sister, and I can see that you have made it beautiful," he assured her, while she fluttered from one beloved ornament to another, removing the covers and restoring them to their wonted places. Sister Bena watched her with an indulgent smile, as if she herself were far above such trifles; but, if Sister Drusia in her haste and distress set anything down in the wrong place, Sister Bena's admonitory tone betrayed, not only her interest, but the fact that she was the head of the household.

"Sister Drusia is disturbed because we are usually in order at this hour. The house is better when it is cleaned," she said, in excuse of her housemate.

"It is certainly a charming place," he insisted in his old affectionate tone; "and I see you do not live here alone, you two."

The stair door had been opened, and there emerged from it the enchanting apparition of a little child just roused from sleep. She held up her long white nightgown, and showed a pair of tiny feet, pink as sea-shells; and as she put one forward, groping with it for the edge of the step, revealed a slender ankle and a dainty, cherubic leg. Her small plump hands, with each finger springing from a dimple, grasped, one her gown, the other the door-frame with a self-helpful grip. Her gown, unbuttoned at the throat, showed a full rounded chest and one shoulder, white and smooth as marble, with a rosy light upon it. Her yellow curls rioted about her face in the babyish moist tangles of sleep. Her expression was half-mischievous, half-inquiring, and she looked down on him with a pair of deeply blue eyes.

Both the old sisters darted at her, with little cooing exclamations of love and wonder at her perspicacity in getting up when she had awakened, and coming down of herself.

"She is the strangest little thing!" Sister Drusia exclaimed. "Now, instead of lying there crying, as some would, she gets up and comes down like a much older child! It is likely she has guessed something of your coming,— one can not say; she is a wonderful child for finding out things!" And while she was

delivering this glowing speech she was offering her trembling old hands in a vain effort to entice the little one to her.

"She wants Sister Bena, of course she does," said the other, as she put Drusia's little body aside and herself stooped over the child.

The little creature pushed her away, with the quiet air of authority. It was plain she wanted neither of them. She turned her blossom of a face to Hugh, and a slow sweet smile spread over it,— the most irresistible, the most confident of smiles. It made the old ladies quiver with pride, but Hugh did not interpret it quickly. Then the blue eyes grew wide and wistful, the Cupid's bow of the mouth was reversed, the whole face seemed about to shiver and break up like an image in the water, when, for the first time, she spoke:

"Helen want 'oo!" she said, with a pretty turn of the head and a swift witching glance from the blue eyes.

Hugh's heart leaped; he took a quick step forward and clasped her to his breast, with a sudden thrill of affection that was akin to a pang. Before she was well settled in his arms she was laughing, a low, soft, triumphant gurgle, and she patted his cheek gently with her little warm hand.

"Well, you are the charmingest baby ever I saw!" he said heartily, as he carried her into the parlor and sat down with her on his knee. Sister Bena looked

curiously at him but did not speak; Sister Drusia glowed and wondered.

"Now, was there ever a thing so strange as that?" she asked. "Who would expect her to take up with a stranger, she who is so stiff with many! You should feel pride, Brother, for she does not like new faces. Oh, she is not a selfish child! No; it is that she is sensitive. It, indeed, is strange; now do not you think it so, Sister?"

The child challenging Hugh's attention, he turned her round as she sat upon his knees and looked smilingly into the cherubic face.

"You are a fascinating young lady," he said, "and as full of contradiction as any! Here you are as fat as a little pig, and as heavy, with the face of a fairy that feeds only upon dew! And you look as if you had just unfolded out of a rosebud, and you are plainly the mistress of this house! How is it?"

The child regarded him as seriously as if she weighed his words; then the slow smile dawned again upon her face and she thrust out her pointed chin to display her teeth, evidently considering them an attraction that he had overlooked.

He greeted them with the admiration she was prepared to exact.

"And your eyes," he said, continuing idly the count of her charms, "are the strangest and the bluest blue ever I saw. I have dreamed of them, though," he added, musing.

"Why!" cried Sister Drusia, "I have not seen it before, but they are like your own, Brother — in color." Of course there were no eyes quite like Helen's in all the world. Sister Bena darted suddenly forward and snatched her from Hugh's knee.

"It is time she had her breakfast," she said abruptly, and carried her to the kitchen. Before they reached it the little house resounded with shrieks. Sister Drusia was wretched.

"I know not why Sister did that," she complained. "I think it strange; the child was not ready for her breakfast, she had not asked it; to me it seems foolish to make her unhappy."

The receding sound of screams seemed to indicate that the baby had been taken into the garden. "It is of no good," she continued; "Helen will cry until she is brought back. She is the strangest child; she knows the thing she wants and she will have no other."

"But is that good for her?" Hugh asked teasingly. "I am afraid you spoil her."

Sister Drusia bridled.

"No, indeed," she said, and for a moment could trust herself no further for indignation. Remembering that this was a guest, and, moreover, that her darling's reputation was at stake, she continued stiffly:

"A spoiled child is not nice, but Helen is one of the nicest children I ever saw. She is not spoiled, but she is the strangest little thing! She is wiser than others of her age; she knows what it is she wants; it is not

for others to tell her different. Now, she wishes to return to you, and Sister Bena should bring her, else she will be ill. I have known her to cry until she was worn out for less than this!"

Hugh tried to turn the conversation into another channel and began to talk of the fatherland. Sister Drusia said "yes," and uttered a little soft monosyllable of encouragement now and then; but it was plain she did not listen. Suddenly she sprang up with desperate resolve.

"Sister must bring her back! She may do herself great harm with such crying. I can not bear it!" And she fluttered out, with the air of a butterfly playing the wasp. But Sister Bena was glad of the excuse to yield.

When the little tyrant was again seated on Hugh's knee, every trace of anger and rebellion had vanished from her flower-like face. She nestled against him for a moment as if in quiet enjoyment of a well-earned pleasure; then she lifted herself and with a certain deliberation, that he might grasp the significance of the act, folded her arms about his neck and kissed him between the eyes. Turning, she held out her arms to Sister Bena, and with a smile that mingled reproof with a heavenly sweetness of forgiveness, she said:

"Now it is bretpus time!"

Sister Drusia turned to Hugh with triumphant smiles.

"There!" she said; "you see she knows her mind. I should think Sister would learn not to cross her; it may spoil her disposition. And that is so sweet! Think how cheerfully she gave up her will after she had got it. Do not you think her a remarkable child, Brother?"

She followed him to the gate, talking all the way of the baby, and Hugh went down the street, smiling indulgently at the two dear old creatures and their little sovereign.

"It is probable that all women are like that in their feeling for children," he mused. Then came a sudden enlightening thought: This was the child he had seen Trillis caressing in the lane; he remembered the blue eyes and the yellow curls. He said to himself he did not wonder; even a man with his heart set upon high ideals might drift into a foolish fondness for that little creature, with her arch tyrannies and her alluring charm.

That night he awoke from some emotion-stirring, unrememberable dream; and as he lay groping for the thread of it, he was conscious of a strange sweet weight upon his breast and recalled the moment when the child had lain there.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE BOND

> Nature excluded, savagely brooded,
> Ruined all queendom and dogmas of state,
> Then in reaction remorseful and mild,
> Rescues the womanhood nearly excluded,
> Shows her what's sweetest in womanly fate —
> Sunshine from heaven and the eyes of a child.
>
> MRS. BROWNING.

While Hugh had been developing at Heidelberg through intellectual activities, Trillis, at Harmonie, had been taken in hand by that stern schoolmistress, Nature, whose method reaches the intellect through the feelings.

For a little while after Hugh's departure Trillis, the pupil, was left in that serene atmosphere of spiritual exaltation into which she had lifted herself, and then was suddenly and cruelly hurled downward by a natural law, which lies in ambush for unwary innocents, into a depth of suffering and shame that no student of the human emotions has yet been able to portray. At first, this law seemed to have no meaning but punishment. She had tempted Hugh from his high destiny, she had almost led him away from it into the world. Her renunciation had not

been accepted as sufficient atonement for her sin; she was now to suffer the agony and shame of inflicting a still greater injury upon him and the community. She was to bear a child which would stand in the way of Hugh's life-work, and bring upon him and the Rappites that hideous brand of scandal which their enemies of the world had never yet been able to fasten upon them.

She who had preached, not only to her own people, but who had gone of late into neighboring settlements to expound the doctrine of the Second Advent to congregations of the world's people, was to become a name of scorn among them, the more active for evil because she had thought herself called to a high service. The bitterest ingredient of this cup of fate was the humiliation of all who loved and believed in her,— not her own helplessness or shame.

From this suffering she evolved the purpose of going away to hide herself until the child was born, and then to seek a new place far away, where her history could never be connected with Hugh or Harmonie; but from some remote corner of her heart came the question: Dared she forfeit the rights of this unborn creature with her own?

When first the feeble claim was heard she was resolute to deny it; the child should yield as the wife had yielded. Not for so small a thing as its right to be fathered should Harmonie be disgraced and Hugh be taken from his great career. But, as the weeks

went by, and her own individuality was more and more affected by the developing one, her personality more and more submerged by the new identity flooding her being, the question was more difficult to answer.

Her love was Hugh's, she herself was his, to be exalted or cast down as his interest required; but the child was God's! From whom else could have come so swift and terrible a punishment upon her? So swift! so awful!— and so sweet! Had she the right to determine its future? Had she been left to decide the question she could not, in the end, have been false to nature, for at the last she lost all other interests in the passion of motherhood. What were the ends of men measured with this mystery of giving birth, that was to connect her with the generations and the infinite future? She was now of the primal forces, and was given to see how all nature, and all man has done upon the earth, centered round her and her mission.

The depths of the sky, when she looked up with that swelling in her throat, held only a little face, the earth held only sunny spots to warm or shady spots to cool a little body, only water for lips of unimaginable sweetness, only a host of beautiful things crowding to their end in the service of the Child.

But, while Trillis gave way to the lassitude and brooding dreams that Nature sent her, Sister Bena awoke as by a miracle to a clear sense of the situation.

The miracle lay in the fact that no other of the curious women at Harmonie, many of whom were themselves mothers, guessed what came to her as a revelation. With quick decision she took Trillis away with her, ostensibly to visit her brother, who had come with the Rappites from Würtemberg, but had remained in Pennsylvania. She managed to leave only harmless comment and interest behind.

The child was born in a little cabin in the backwoods of northern Indiana. Every comfort had been provided and all things should have gone well, but the last mistress of the cabin had left the germs of fever behind her, and Trillis lay for weeks after the birth of her daughter and knew her not in her delirium.

Father Rapp was summoned, and came with a heavy and a tender heart. As he stood beside the bed upon which Walter Daventry's wasted child tossed in the madness of fever, he could but recall that night when her dying father had intrusted her to him; and many a painful battle was waged between his pity for her and his duty to Harmonie.

In the nearest cabin lived a gaunt, life-worn, ague-wasted, pioneer woman, whose five children slept in sight of her door, and whose only pleasure had been the care of the little unmarked graves. The coming of the strangers and the birth of the baby made the first interest that ever weaned her from this melancholy one. She undertook the care of the child with

pathetic delight, and came many times a day to feed and fondle it. While Trillis was still delirious, it fell out that this woman's husband sold his clearing to move to a settlement on the upper Wabash.

To the wife the leaving of the five little graves seemed unbearable, but she had now the additional pang of giving up the baby, who had brought the only comfort for her repeated sorrows. Both Father Rapp and Sister Bena saw in these circumstances a providential solution of the question that confronted them. This good woman, capable and tender, loved and longed for the child that was a menace to the interests of Harmonie, to Hugh's future and, should she recover, to the mother who bore it.

They gave it into the care of the pioneer family, after providing well for its support and education, and Father Rapp went back to the community in the serene persuasion of having wisely surmounted another difficulty. It was arranged that the two women should make the projected visit to Pennsylvania as soon as Trillis was able to travel; after which they might return to Harmonie without danger of betrayal of the secret, and take up their duties there where they had dropped them.

Three weeks later Father Rapp was confronted in his own house by a white and wasted young creature who demanded her child, and who would take no denial. Nor would she agree to any compromise other than the one she proposed.

"Find her," she demanded; "bring her here, rear her in the community; and I will make no claim upon Hugh. I will remain and I will keep the secret — for as long as it seems best for the child and him."

Perhaps George Rapp, master of men, saw he could not conquer the passion and will that met him here; perhaps he was glad to restore the child upon these terms and to make what restitution he might. He set out, though it was the rainy season in the beginning of winter; the roads were difficult, and the weather uncertain.

It was a long and weary journey to the portage at the head waters of the Wabash and the Maumee. Here, in a hamlet of log cabins gathered about the shallows through which the Indians carried canoes and cargoes of explorers, trappers, traders, and all the restless spirits who connected the great Northwest with the Ohio and Mississippi countries, he found the pioneer family and their foster child.

The woman was dying of quick consumption, and thanked God that he came to relieve her fear of leaving the little one to strangers. When he returned to Harmonie, bringing with him a little child whose mother had intrusted it to his care, as he explained, there was no question, and only affectionate interest and rejoicing in the new ward of the Rappites.

Any household in the village would have welcomed it with delight, but Sister Bena was the first to claim it.

"A young child is a care, and you have not seemed so strong of late," Father Rapp objected when she made the claim. They were sitting at the time in her own parlor, Sister Drusia being in bed up stairs with a headache, awaiting the ministrations of Trillis, who had gone that afternoon to the island to visit Brother Laurence.

The candles were lighted, and a small bundle of fagots, bound in old-world fashion, was blazing upon the hearth. Father Rapp and Sister Bena were old now, and the passions of youth had burned to ashes; there remained only an affectionate warmth and mutual understanding which neither thought it necessary to hide when they were alone together.

As he spoke, George Rapp looked at the little figure, still girlish and graceful, at the beautiful old face, with its faint color and its texture of a fading petal, and he smiled tenderly. She flushed under the smile, and said lightly:

"There is nothing the matter. I am just growing old. The care of a child would make me young again. Do not you remember how happy I was when Hugh was little?"

She smiled into the fire, and he knew it was at the vision of the blue-eyed boy whom she had adored. And he reflected pityingly, how, as the boy developed to manhood, he grew away from her, and he, himself, had succeeded her in the control of her darling's life.

"This is a woman-child, Bena, and might comfort

you all your life, if I could feel it right to permit you to undertake such a burden."

"You must permit me," replied Sister Bena. "Trillis has asked me to take her baby to my heart, and love it as I loved Hugh, when he was cast off by his father."

"He has not cast it off! He does not know of its existence," he answered her hotly, resenting the blame in her tone.

Sister Bena's dark eyes flashed in their turn.

"It would be as it is, if he did know. Men do not often hesitate to sacrifice the helpless to their ambitions! But you must go gently here, for Trillis is no meek German woman who has it in her blood to obey. Nor should you think that because you gave her the education of a man and now give her the responsibilities of a man, and consult her as you would a man, she will put ambition before her woman's heart. She will not. Now she does as you wish, but how know you that this will last? You must make it easy for her; you must not set the child on one side and ambition on the other, as you have planned to do. Think you it would take her one moment to decide? Give me the child, trust to her honor, but do not drive her at all. I shall help you then, and help her to keep her word."

"Why do I ever contend at all with you, Bena? You never yet yielded to my view. Take the child tonight." He had risen and stood smiling down on

her. "Only, I shall expect you to help me to hold Trillis."

"Shall I be free to do it in my own way?"

"How else?" he laughed carelessly.

"Then, when she comes back she will go to your house for the baby."

"That is folly! Keep her away from the child. Let her not learn to love it!"

There was no possibility of expressing all the contempt that this masculine view of mother-love awoke, even in the heart of a Rappite old maid. Sister Bena contented herself with one withering glance.

"If you do not know what a mother is, you do know what a she-bear is; God made all mothers of the same stuff for the same reason. Not one has had to learn to love her offspring, and not one will be easily deprived of her right in it. You will do well to leave Trillis and her baby to me."

"I have no choice. I do not agree with you, but I am growing old — I could not withstand you when I was young."

"You were so strong-headed then you needed some one to keep down your will. There was never such another, boy or man, to have his will as you." She answered in all seriousness, and he smiled to think how useless it was to be humorous with Bena; still he loved to quiz her.

"I think you are right," he said, "especially when you limit it to boys and men." Then he added gen-

tly: "Good night, Sister; your wisdom never tricked me yet."

"That is true," she answered, with artless confidence in it; and he went through the silent streets, smiling still at the count of her gentle tyrannies that had followed him all through his life, and were, he remembered, to bless him still until that hour when his Master should appear in the heavens and call him to his place in the New Kingdom.

He had not been long at home when Trillis came. She would not enter. She had come for the child, she said, in a tone as colorless as she might have used in asking for a remedy for Sister Drusia's headache.

He himself brought it to her, wrapped in a blanket — a warm, quiet, helpless little bundle, looking inanimate enough, but sending out some electric influence which thrilled him. He could not trust himself to speak when he laid it in the mother's arms. He felt himself shrinking and cowering as from the explosion of heart forces that were almost audible in their action.

Trillis, standing dark and tall in the doorway, took the child without a word, wrapped it in her cloak, and, turning, went quietly out into the street. Father Rapp went in and shut the door. He was pale and his hands trembled.

"What creatures women are!" he gasped. "There is no man on earth could have been so calm — if she felt anything at all!"

Had he followed her he would have been aware of nothing more than a woman, who walked quietly along the street clasping a sleeping baby in her arms. He would not have seen her caress it; he would have heard no expression of love or longing.

There would have been nothing to reveal the holy joy, the frenzied love, the agony and the ecstasy she poured out upon the child which lay for the first time in her arms, satisfying for the first time all that wild hunger of devotion it had called into being in the heart against which it lay warm and soothing as some healing balm.

Trillis, now that the child was safe, returned by degrees to her vocation of healer and teacher. Much of her old, unquestioning faith was gone, but she had replaced it with the better kind, which develops from suffering and doubt. She had had her time of agony, when she had thought herself forsaken of love and given over to wrath; but what had seemed the most terrible phase of her punishment had been averted. She had not been forced to bring shame upon Harmonie nor to interfere with Hugh's career. That he was ignorant of the consequence of their transgression of the laws of Harmonie, that she had been permitted to suffer alone, she accepted as the favor of a pitying and forgiving God. Though the old glad fervor of service, the old confidence in her power to serve acceptably were gone, she was still ready to con-

tinue the work which He had interrupted with the lightnings of wrath.

The Harmonists, though they had a pharmacopœia of native herbs and barks, had anticipated the secrets of the masseur and similar modern practitioners. Their success in what the pioneers knew as the "rubbing treatment," the laying on of hands, brought them patients from all over that region. Sister Ermengarde had a spare chamber at the schoolmaster's house, which was generally occupied by a stranger,— some traveler or immigrant whom good fortune had brought to Harmonie in his hour of need.

As Sister Ermengarde's assistant, Trillis had learned the art of nursing and developed a magnetic touch and the power to inspire the failing spirit with the hope which heals.

The brothers quietly spread the fame of her cures among the traders at the store, and she was often called upon to minister to the sick outside the community. Full as her life was, even tranquilly happy as the power to help and bless others made her, there were times when her heart turned rebel, and she cried out against her fate.

There were other times when it was a doubter and a coward. She had suffered for transgression and deceit; was she entirely free from those sins in her present course of life? She knew that the old men and women of Harmonie, to whose aching bones her firm hand brought relief, and the pioneer women and

children poisoned with malaria, to whom her knowledge and stimulating personality were a boon, looked upon her as an inspired virgin, the very bride of Christ, and sacred to His ministries. And she was a longing wife, a doting mother, a mere loving and sinning woman to whom all the large ideals, all the great movements, spiritual and temporal, were as nothing compared to the love of one man and the needs of one child.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE MEETING

You looked into mine eyes an instant's space,
And all the boundaries of time and place
Broke down, and far into the world beyond
Of buried hopes and dreams my soul had sight
Where dim desires long lost and memories fond
Rose in a soft mirage of tender light.

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY.

Brother Hanno was rowing Hugh to the island, and preparing him for unexpected changes there, as they went.

"Theodor is cock of the walk, an it please thee," he said, betraying a certain jealousy. "He is too fine and smooth for a man! Often am I moved to ruffle him a petticoat and open doors for him. And his father is like dough in his hands; he dotes upon him like an aged widower upon a young *Frau*. And yet they are as unaccountable a pair as one might meet in a lifetime; for all their sweet words and gentle manners there are times when I think neither trusts the other out of his sight.

"Theodor took the failure of his community to heart, and worked hard in many cities of Europe seeking men and money for another, but at last he

came back to Harmonie, a beaten man. George Rapp pitied him and gave him a hearty welcome. 'Twas strange, that home-coming to the island! It was as puzzling as a Russ wedding I saw once when we were marching on Moscow—the bride gave the bridegroom a knotted whip, and looked on him, cringing! When Theodor came, Laurence was sitting upon the porch—not all there, for his spirit was a-wandering, as it does, thou knowest. Theodor goes down on his knees before his chair, still as the dumb. Laurence puts out his hand and feels of his son's face as if he were a blind man, and then without a word, he drops slowly down on Theodor's shoulder. 'Twas a meeting of ghosts, and gave me goose-flesh!

"Theodor is a shadow-chaser, like his father. He used to be a true high-born, proud, and eager, and fond of the sunshine; but now he is old and gloomy as a Trappist friar."

The instinctive attraction Hugh had felt from childhood for his father had ripened in his absence abroad to a true filial love. He had returned with the intention of realizing, now that he had been acknowledged as a son, that close and precious relation of which he had dreamed, and something in Hanno's recital chilled this hope.

When he stood beside his father's chair and felt the feeble and listless clasp of his hand, and was welcomed by him with a half-alienated attention, he could but recall Hanno's description of that other meeting, so

charged with feeling, with a sense of injury. In a short time, by indefinable processes, he came to feel himself an intruder upon the island, and removed his residence to the village. But even the sense of injury could not wholly obliterate the clinging thoughts of a lifetime, and he was often drawn back to his father's presence, always to suffer shock at seeing how he had aged and changed.

In a short time he realized that the physical change was the least, the intellectual and spiritual nature being almost unrecognizable as that of Laurence von Korassel. It was at first impossible to see how deep the havoc had gone, but, day by day, the son learned that no sentiment, no faculty, no belief, no source of happiness remained untouched by it. Brother Laurence's whole being was absorbed in brooding upon his position as a faithless steward and suspected criminal. His mind made progress in but one direction, missing all other paths of affection or interest, and floundering always in a morass of agony and shame.

On the day succeeding Hugh's return to Harmonie, Trillis had been summoned to the bedside of poor Lizzie Silliman, who was ending her pioneer's hardships by dying of malaria in the still comfortless cabin where she had waged her brave and futile struggle with misfortune. When, several days later, she returned to the community and set out to visit Brother Laurence, she and Hugh had not met. The day was sultry, and the depression of spirit in which Trillis

approached the island had its physical parallel in that sadness and tension with which sensitive persons are affected by a brooding storm. She knew she might meet Hugh there, and the possibility sent her spirit swinging dizzily between ecstasy and dread. To see him again, the broad shoulders whose lines had a distinctive beauty, the mouth, the blue eyes, the hair he tossed back from his brow in careless waves — it would be sweet! But, what changes might she not see, also — coldness, aversion, or, more to be dreaded, kindness?

The island, in the seclusion of lapping waters, with the stone house shut in by crowding trees and tangled shrubbery, seemed the veritable abode of peace; and the quiet figure of Brother Laurence, sitting alone upon the porch, wrapped in the perfumed shadows of the climbing roses, stilled her tumultuous thoughts, and she was able to greet him with her usual serenity of manner. She found him very feeble, with strange weakness in his face, as of one whose will had failed at last. Almost at once she learned that this was what had happened to the schoolmaster; for, forgetting his wonted ceremony of address, and throwing aside the barriers of temperament that had hitherto divided them, he carried her hand to his face, and, leaning his cheek upon it, looked up at her with the self-pity of an ailing child.

"It is well you have come, Trillis," he said; "I am ill and need you so."

"Where are the others? Are you all alone?"

"I have not said to them that I am ill. I wanted not anything of them; I wanted only you to comfort me."

His voice and clinging manner touched her deeply; she knelt beside his chair, and stroked his forehead and his wasted cheeks. Presently the tension of his features yielded, and she began to sing one of the dear old German hymns she had learned of the schoolmaster himself. For a little while the music soothed him, but evidently his sorrow was deeper than she had thought, for he aroused himself and began to speak with feverish eagerness.

"I want to tell you, Sister; I must tell you — it is killing me, this gnawing pain!"

"Brother, why do you not go to Father Rapp? His power is so much greater than mine. Surely you remember how many he has healed. Only a few days ago they brought into the village a sick man from up the river. It was Silliman, who has the cabin near the deer-lick. He was lost in the swamp and torn by a wildcat, so that he had a high fever, and his wounds would not heal. He had once seen the Temple of Harmonie, and it was his thought that the angel there could cure him. So they brought him — poor, wasted creature — and Father Rapp went with him, and they laid him at the feet of the Angel of Silence, and the Spirit descended upon Father Rapp, and he laid his hands upon the sick man, and his fever and pain de-

parted. He rested for a few days with Sister Ermengarde, and then returned to his home healed of his sickness."

Brother Laurence had listened indifferently, wrapped in the selfishness of an absorbing grief.

"But my pain is not a mere fever, not a wound to be healed in the flesh. There are agonies beyond these, and from such I suffer. Sister,"— leaning closer to her he began to whisper,—"what I tell you is a secret." Then, starting up, he cried hoarsely:

"Not here; I can not tell you here! Who knows but there are listeners? But I will tell you, if you will but help me to my chamber, where we can be safe from spies and enemies."

"Why, Brother, who is there to spy among us? Who to be an enemy to one so beloved as you have been by all? Put away these evil thoughts, dear schoolmaster," she urged, as she tenderly helped him up the stairs to his room.

But he could be weaned from his tormenting thoughts for but a moment, returning to them always with a feverish persistence. Although she divined that he was trembling upon the brink of insanity, and that the secret which tortured him probably was an illusion, she encouraged him to unburden his mind. Many times he seemed upon the point of telling it, always to shrink from the actual revelation with a piteous show of mental weakness. Worn out at last, he fell asleep under her magnetic hand. She sat be-

side him in a sort of lethargy, not actually thinking, but permitting thoughts and emotions to drift through her spirit and stir it as they might.

The wasted face upon the pillow was very pitiable in sleep, and contrasted painfully with earlier memories of the handsome, melancholy Brother Laurence for whom she had always had a love of peculiar tenderness. She had long ceased to wonder about the mystery that had eclipsed his already darkened spirit, and with other members of the community held him innocent, without being able to explain the disappearance of the missing money. It seemed cruel that he should have suffered so deeply from the mere shadow of dishonor, and her heart yearned over him in his pain and increasing weakness. A sense of the human burden, the heavy woe and loss of human life, swept over her, and her heart contracted with fear.

Renunciation, self-devotion, high-living, the sacrifice of all for which the erring heart hungers, had not availed Brother Laurence. The success of the cause for which he had forfeited wife and children and a place in the world was as nothing to him now; the high ideals he had followed could not comfort him; the God he had served did not release him from this merciless bondage to illusory griefs and shame. Was it worth while, then, to miss the sweetness of living, when the sacrifice might be in vain?

There was a step upon the stairs, a shadow upon the floor. Trillis sprang to her feet, and, by some un-

controllable impulse of fear and joy, turned quickly, and stood panting with her face to the wall. Upon the wall, over the dressing-table which had been her mother's, hung a mirror large enough to reflect her figure at half-length, and even in that instant of overwhelming emotion her eye was attracted to it, and she saw the image of herself, startled, palpitating, with wide eyes and clasped hands, and the image of Hugh, startled also, wide-eyed and agitated, gazing straight into her reflected face. It was as if they looked at their own ghosts in some full moment of revelation when souls are naked and unashamed.

Trillis read surprise, delight, and the sudden resurrection of old passions in his countenance, and saw that her own was revealing joy and love, the power of old ties, and, she thought, proclaiming the imperious bond of their unity in the child. The longing to throw herself upon his breast, to tell him of little Helen and claim his paternal love for her was overwhelming. She might not have resisted it, had not the sound of footsteps in the hall broken the spell of that revealing gaze, and recalled them both to actualities. It was Hanno, come to warn Trillis that the storm was gathering fast, and she must cross the river at once if she wished to return to Harmonie before night. He considered it fortunate that Hugh was returning also, and might help her to manage the boat.

"Now this is to my mind," he said gleefully. "I would not that Sister Trillis should go alone, but

I have my work here, and can not well go myself. I take it that Hugh is of the lucky troop into whose mouths the roast geese come flying, and upon whose backs the wind blows fleeces ready cured. 'Give a man luck and throw him into the sea,' they say; and you are to have it, Brother Hugh; for I swear that in all the bonnets you peeked under in Germany you have seen no brighter eyes nor fairer face than hers you are to cross the slough with! Deny it not, for of course you had your fun with the German maids, and thought them fair, no doubt, while the fever lasted. Ah! *Saperlot!* But there are things a-doing outside of Harmonie! This is the only spot in all the world where life goes by with no fighting or loving. Who expects the cat to pass the cream pans without licking, or a youth to see a maiden's lips pouting without kissing them? Oh, I'd be no Harmonist, were I young like Hugh!"

Talking in this un-Rappite strain, he accompanied them down the slope of the island to the shore, where the skiff already strained at its tether in the wind-rippled waters of the slough.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE TEMPTATION

Love comes back to his vacant dwelling—
The old, old love that we knew of yore!
Ah, who shall help us from overspelling
That sweet, forgotten, forbidden lore?

AUSTIN DOBSON.

Hugh neither turned nor spoke until they were seated in the skiff.

"I fear we shall not make it," he said, looking up at the sky.

Trillis' gaze followed his, but she was blind to its aspect. The storm had broken in her own heart, and all her thoughts were involved in its tumult. It did not take them long to reach the shore, and she was not conscious that she stood waiting docile while he fastened the skiff to its stake. The bank rose steeply to the field above, and he took her arm and helped her to climb it. At the top the wind met them with such force that they clung together for a moment like children.

The sun had been quenched by the black clouds, or shone with a green and unnatural light whenever the wind swept their tatters aside. The thunder

burst at their very ears, and the lightning kept thrusting at them so near that they thrilled each time with the excitement of escape. Trillis had no fear of the storm; the display of elemental force appealed to something akin to it in her spirit, yet she was faint and shaken, and her heart labored in her bosom. Nature, the mother, has a way of permitting her children to run alone, as if they were free agents, and all the while she is leading or compelling them through her hidden ministers—the weathers, the seasons, the waters, the very contours of the earth, which control the spirit of man and stir his passions, that are her servants also.

This poor daughter of hers, reared in the closest relation with her, in spite of spiritual achievement and experience in things higher than Nature, was dominated by the storm, filled with restlessness by it, stirred to strange impulses, and withal as helpless as any leaf that danced in the wild winds—and knew it. Alone with Hugh, with the world darkening round them, and the fury of the storm directed upon them, she felt she should be weak, indeed, unless he were strong. To him there was no question of strength or weakness. Fate had thrown them together — a man and a woman who had loved each other, and he was simply curious to know what Fate would make of the situation.

Standing beside her at the top of the bank, he looked at her; though other objects were blurred or

indistinguishable, he saw her plainly enough against the gathering blackness, a noble woman's figure draped, according to every man's ideal, in filmy white, a small, proud head with its knot of dark, wind-blown curls, a gleaming brow and smooth, oval cheek, and eyes with a mysterious glow in their dark depths. But her beauty touched him only with impersonal charm; he felt it was something deeper and stronger that began to allure him. He could hear her quick breathing as she braced herself against the wind, and the arm he held seemed to quiver with nervous tension. Clearly she was not indifferent, saint and evangelist though she was, but a woman still!

"Come, we must hasten," she whispered, and drew away from him.

Strong as she was and inured to all weathers, Trillis could not run against that wind. She was soon obliged to stop, clinging to a tree while she regained her spent breath.

"It is of no use," Hugh said, smiling at Fate. "We can go no farther. We must take shelter in the corn barn." He took her arm again.

"No! No!" she cried, pulling away from him almost rudely in her agitation.

"Why not?" His tone of cool reproof seemed to imply that he had read all the fluctuations of her feeling and despised them.

"It will be best," she said humbly.

The corn barn was built upon the edge of the bank,

in order that boats might be loaded directly from it. It had a pair of enormous doors upon the river side; and when Hugh had propped them partly open a pale light was reflected from the tossing waters, and the voice of them filled the great gloom-haunted place and produced the illusion of rocking upon the waves, as if the barn were a boat and they two alone in it at the mercy of the storm.

This was so strong a delusion that Hugh, in a normal frame of mind and calm of feeling, felt it constantly return upon him. Trillis, thrown from her habitual poise by the afternoon's conflict of emotions, was overwhelmed by this seeming abandonment to wind and water. Fear and melancholy possessed her; fear of some black, impending fate which she had brought upon Hugh, and a shy happiness that they were to meet it together.

The lower floor of the corn barn was used at this season to shelter wagons and farm implements. Hugh found a wagon-seat which he drew into the light for Trillis, and he made himself comfortable upon a saddle with one of the huge pillars of the barn to lean against. They sat in the weird glamour and looked out upon the storm-torn river in a long silence.

It was probably a lover who discovered that words are chiefly useful for the concealment of thought. Although Hugh did not count himself a lover, he found it wise at this moment to speak in order to conceal thoughts that were crowding upon him.

"It is good to be at home again, in my own country," he said.

"Yes; but you must have found much to enjoy in Europe — so much that is different."

"But the charm of being different comes back with you and fixes itself upon the things you have always known. Harmonie is different from every other place in all the world, and I love it for the difference. I am glad to be back."

"I sometimes thought you might not wish to come back. It was only that Europe seems to offer temptations to ambitious young men," she said.

"But you knew that my ambitions are centered upon Harmonie?"

She considered his tone,— it was significant; but she was determined not to show again that his presence stirred her to thoughts of their past relation. She made no reply, and he continued in a more personal tone:

"I have not considered any course but to return and take my place here. It was a great delight to be welcomed so warmly by everybody; only — you have not welcomed me back, Trillis."

"No; there has been no opportunity."

"Until now. And even now you do not say you are glad to see me."

She drew herself up with a quick, angry gesture. "I do not understand you; but I will say, 'You are welcome to Harmonie, Brother Hugh von Korassel.'"

"Thank you, Trillis," he replied humbly. "Sister," he said, after a pause, "what have you been doing since I went away? I should be glad to know all that has happened to you, if you will tell me?"

"What could happen at Harmonie?"

Her voice was sharp with bitterness. Had he never dreamed what might happen? His face was so placid that she caught at her self-control with a little hysterical laugh. He had not dreamed of it. Fate had not interfered with the comfortable current of his life; all the penalty was hers. She recovered her serenity and answered him quietly.

"I think I had begun nursing and preaching before you went away. I have kept on,— so many persons have needed me that now I have a wide circle of friends outside the community. I do not preach so often as I once did; I do not feel so sure of the call, and somehow the work with the sick people grows and spreads more widely. My life has been busy and full of change."

He looked at her with respect. "You have done so much!" he said wistfully; "I have only been getting ready, while you were doing things. You are so serious, Trillis, so wise, so good, and so far above me."

The tears sprang into her eyes. "Don't, don't talk like that," she pleaded hoarsely, as if his words gave her pain.

"Why not? You are a saint, Trillis; your very

face shows it. I should not be worthy to be your husband, even though things had been different."

The calmness with which he touched this vital point in their experience was unbearable. She arose, and, opening the door toward the field, she stood panting with the struggle to keep a self-control that might match his indifference. Presently, it was borne in upon her mind that the wind was calmer, the rain had ceased, and the sky was lighting with the unveiled colors of sunset.

"The storm is over, I shall go now," she said. He came and stood beside her in the doorway.

"You think I am a foolish boy, and I am, compared to you, who are so high-minded, so superior to the temptations of feeling. To you it is nothing that we loved each other once. You have forgotten!"

Hugh could not have explained this outburst; perhaps he felt that Fate had not been equal to her opportunity, and his own sense of the romantic situation drove him into speech that implied more than he felt. How was the woman, with her bitter experience, to answer this trifling? Her absolute sincerity taught her.

"No," she replied, "I have not been able to forget. But we did not forfeit our marriage lightly. We thought we had an obligation far more binding than marriage vows, and we gave up happiness for higher things. I, at least, understood that the sacrifice must be complete, and that it was for ever. It was for

Harmonie — I have tried to put my heart into the same cause which you ——"

Her words trailed off into the silence, as they threaded their way between the trees. She had been carried out of herself at the beginning of this speech, but the cruel, and now humiliating, situation unnerved her with the fear of betraying too much.

The rain had ceased, and the wind had died; but the sky was still so full of clouds that night was coming prematurely. Their progress was slow because the lane had been washed in gullies, or, where it dipped, was spread with a chill sheet of water; and they were often confronted with fallen trees in their path. Trillis fell into the crown of an uprooted maple, with an involuntary cry for help. When he took her hands they were cold, and she shrank and trembled at his touch, belying the calm strength that had impressed him in her last words. He put his arm round her and whispered, "May I help you?"

Nothing in all her experience had tried the temper of her soul as this moment. With Hugh's arm around her, sheltering her in the warmth and strength of his body, all scruples and ideals dropped out of her consciousness, and left only the thought that he was near and was kind.

Trillis Daventry, the ward of the Rappites, knew little more of the protecting conventionalities that civilization has set about the passion of love than the young Eve in the garden of Eden. Love, in her case,

was a natural and primal force; her only defense against it was the tenets of the Harmonists and her loyalty to George Rapp, and what she conceived to be the interests of the community. Powerful as these things were in moments of calm reflection, they could no more hold back the tide of feeling when Hugh's arm was round her, and they were alone in the gathering darkness, than the maple tree could have held back the wind that felled it. A man's love rushes headlong to the satisfaction of the senses; a woman's is more than half-satisfied when it is returned.

When, in her ignorant youth, Trillis, caught up into the heaven of young love and dazed by its glamour, had poured out her own wealth of feeling lavishly, she had not counted the returns. Afterward she learned how pitifully unfair they were. She had loved; Hugh had responded to love.

In the struggle at the church, on the morning after the marriage, between the influence of Father Rapp and her claim upon Hugh she had had no chance at all. Had he loved her as she loved him, nothing — no question of conscience, no ambitions, no filial ties — could have had an instant's weight.

It had been for her to give him up, because it was best for his interests and those of Harmonie, but primarily because she could not hold him; he did not love her enough. This had been the bitterest pang of her subsequent sufferings; and the longing to make him love her yet, to exact some return for all

she had given, was the touch of unconquerable earthiness that defied her awakened spirituality.

Hugh could perceive that she was charged with some throbbing emotion, and he responded to it as he had done before, so that Trillis was in danger of deceiving herself again. His arm tightened about her, and her heart leaped with the old joy. She hung trembling upon the next moment. He bent and kissed her, whispering, "Trillis!" The kiss stung her like a blow. She sprang away from him.

"Don't!" she cried, shrill with excitement. "O my God! It is the same kiss! Never — never dare to offer me that again!" She pushed him back and beat her hands together in the darkness.

"Trillis!" he cried, in wonder. "What is it? I thought you felt as I did. I thought you yielded to my arm."

"Yes," she replied, "I did yield. It was more than I could resist. I had forgotten what men are like! I forgot, after all I have borne! I who know so well what your love means."

Her wild passion and the thrill of some deep and secret pain that pierced it touched him in recesses of feeling that life had not heretofore penetrated. Pity, wonder, awe, and a faint and timid joy were stirred by this revelation of her soul. And, naturally, because he had a high ideal of manliness and had been hitherto conscious of living up to it, the reproach in that last cry smote him and made him ashamed.

"I beg you to forgive me," he said humbly; "and yet there is no excuse for me. It was only a momentary temptation, and I have been false and weak."

They had entered the village and could walk freely now. Lights shone from the houses, but there were no passengers upon the quiet streets.

"I will go on alone," she said quietly.

"Let me go with you a little way — only long enough to say that I will never again offend you as I have done to-night; and to ask you if you are willing we should be friends? I shall need you; we were always helpful to each other — you remember that? If I am to take an important part in the future of Harmonie, you must help me with your influence and your counsel. I promise you I will put the past out of my mind — that part of it which you wish to forget; I will think of you only as Sister Trillis, my fellow worker. I will keep my vow even in thought. Will you be friends upon those terms?"

The temptation to awaken Hugh's love, the allurement of her own passion, the shame and anger which followed, had all subsided; and now when he asked her friendship, Trillis recalled the old relation of their childhood, and, ignoring all that had come between, actually forgetting for a moment the child she had borne to him, she promised, in all sincerity. Marveling at the sudden quieting of her mad emotions, yet not doubting her honesty any more than he doubted his own, Hugh accepted her pledge of friendship.

"Then I may seek you when I need you; and you will trust me not to offend you again?"

"Yes," she replied, with quiet confidence in this new compact.

But, when they had parted at the door of the schoolmaster's house, and she had recovered her usual sane grasp of events, Trillis found herself with a heavier burden of humiliation and self-blame than she had ever borne before.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE TIGHTENING OF THE BOND

My pent-up tears oppress my brain,
My heart is swollen with love unsaid,
Ah, let me weep and tell my pain,
And on thy bosom rest my head.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Not far from Sister Drusia's cottage and within the same inclosure was another, smaller, but very like it, and, upon Hugh's return to Harmonie the two old sisters were delighted to put it in order for his occupancy.

He had objected to living at either of the rooming-houses, because he could have neither the space nor the privacy for his inventions; for the inborn taste for mechanics had been greatly developed by his years of study abroad. The little cottage in Sister Drusia's garden offered exactly what he needed,— a large room for a workshop, an outer and smaller for an office, and a large and airy sleeping-room above.

The arrangement included meals at the larger cottage, which seemed to the two old sisters the happiest thing that could have befallen them. When Hugh came in, rosy, gay, and hungry, and romped with little Helen while they set dinner upon the table,

they constantly exchanged glances of pure delight; and when they sat at table, Hugh at the head as if he were master of the house, Helen in a high chair with a snowy bib tied under her chin, Sister Drusia beside her, obsequious and happy, and Sister Bena nearest the door in order to trot out into the kitchen as often as possible for the things that were "keeping hot," — their delicate old faces were fairly rosy with pleasure.

Sister Bena had always acknowledged ownership in Hugh, and to have him now in her household filled her with unbounded pride. The feeling had occasioned a slight division in the family — rather a readjustment, for where there had been constant rivalry for the favor of Helen there was now the tacit understanding that Hugh had deposed her in Sister Bena's care, which left Sister Drusia a clear field with the baby,— and she proceeded to occupy it without loss of time.

As for Helen, she simply added Hugh to the train of her slaves. He was, himself, still so boyish and merry-hearted that there were no barriers between him and childhood. Moreover, he felt Helen's undoubted charm, was melted by her pleading looks, amused at the ingenuity with which she got her way with everybody, and immensely interested in watching the development of her active mind and strongly individualized character. It was an age when educational problems occupied the minds of savants and

students. In the brilliant circle to which Hugh had belonged in Paris, there was lively interest in Pestalozzi's experiments, and in all the various schemes for the education that was to further all other projects for the uplifting of mankind.

Whoever makes earnest study of a child comes in time to love it,— this being one problem which the brain can not solve without the heart to enlighten it. And day by day this little creature drew closer and closer to the heart of the young man who, though he felt her peculiar charm, dreamed not that she had a right to the devotion she exacted with such pretty imperiousness.

Hugh's life, since his return to Harmonie, was as he himself would have planned it. There was plenty of hard work, of one kind to strain and swell the muscles, of another to test the brain. There was a constant progress through difficulties and over obstacles which gave just the needed spur to effort and every day presented some new opportunity of developing his power of mastery in shop or mill. He worked as gaily as if he were playing, and played with the intensity that he put into his work.

He was conscious, too, of moving in an atmosphere of entire approval; there was not a detractor or critic in all his world. His life went as smoothly as a performance on the stage, where the strong man progresses from one successful feat to another before a spellbound audience.

Brother Frederic Richardt had developed a taste for public life, and was this fall a candidate for the legislature. In his day the office-seeker rode the circuit of his constituent territory, on horseback, and his long and frequent absences left the business management of the community to Hugh. Thoroughly familiar with every trade the Harmonists plied, the young man threw himself into each with what seemed a special ardor, and was soon reorganizing and enlarging the scope of every one of them. In his workshop in Sister Bena's garden, he was sure to have three or four machines or implements in process of improvement at the same time, and there seemed no task of all the varied labors of the communists but he could suggest an easier or a better or a quicker way to do it.

He was an eager huntsman, a patient fisherman; he could tame any horse, run a mile, walk many miles in the morning before the day's work began, or drop down on a doorstep to bandy jokes with some old sister in a leisure as profound as if he made a profession of idleness.

Naturally, such a temperament gave little heed to the phenomena of sentiment or passion; naturally also, when sentiment and passion had once taken hold upon him, their power would be both great and immediate. Since the night when they had come together from the island in the storm, Hugh had thought almost continually of Trillis. She was often

before his eyes as she had looked at the moment of his entrance to the room where she was visiting his father, her head up, her eyes dark and tender. Her presence had radiated something more than beauty,—warmth, power, intense and glowing emotion, all individualized by some delicate charm of her own that he remembered from the days of their childhood.

The recollection of her yielding figure within the circle of his arm was continually coming into his mind, and that piercing cry when he had kissed her haunted him. There was, too, a strange expression upon her face as she sat in church, a something that hinted of inner struggle and unshared thoughts. The drooping lashes too often veiled the eyes that he remembered as too widely open to all the passing interests of life before he went away; and the pure lines of her cheek, not flushing now with palpitating color as it used to do, but serenely white, as if her heart had ceased to leap, reproached him.

He did not hesitate to admit that he had wronged Trillis, in the ignorance and selfishness of his youth; but he told himself that she had grandly outlived the injury, had even wrenched angelic victories from it. What noble beauty, what serenity of womanhood, what saint-like devotion marked her now! And yet, he asked himself at times, was there not something morbid, something broken and never made whole, something torn and never healed?

He accused himself of morbidness, and fell upon

his work with zeal, only to find himself remembering that she had acknowledged yielding to his arm that night.

Hugh was riding homeward one evening after a business trip to Vincennes. He expected only to make the outlying farm where Brother Vitus lived, that night, and he did not urge his lagging horse. The day had been warm and the night was sultry and clouded. When he drew near the little church which had been the scene of his marriage, lights and the music of a hymn proclaimed that a service was now being held within it. He yielded to an impulse, and, riding up to the fence, hitched his horse with those of the worshipers.

He entered the church in a strange mood of curiosity; half-obeying, and half-defying the sentiment that naturally clung around his memories of it. The worshipers were few and they could be dimly seen, scattered over the benches outside the radius of the candles at the altar. These were not many, and they flickered and burned unsteadily in the wafts of moist wind coming in at all the open windows. Hugh slipped in while the congregation was still standing for the hymn and seated himself in a dark corner. When the song had finished, a dim white figure advanced from the gloom behind the pulpit, and he saw that the preacher was Trillis.

She came here then, to this church where she had become his wife, and preached to these backwoodsmen

as indifferently as if the place held no sacred memories, and was powerless to disturb her spiritual calm. A sudden fierce anger shook him, and he almost expected his challenging thoughts would arrest her and cover her with confusion. But she stepped quietly to the edge of the platform which raised the rude pulpit, and began her discourse. Her voice, full and sweet, flowed on without effort, filling the little room and gradually subduing his anger to the point of listening with fitful interest. Sometimes, her thoughts fastened themselves upon his attention and he yielded himself to them; at other times his memory dwelt upon another night in this same place, and he was lost in the resurrected emotions of that moment when, lifting her head in the light of the dying fire, she had called "Hugh!" in a tone which at once recognized and welcomed their new relation.

The candles in the path of the breeze went out, one by one, until she stood in a little circle of light, while all the congregation was swallowed up in the smoky gloom. Her beautiful, spirited head, with its knot of rebellious curls, the fine line of her shoulders and arms and the rhythmic motions of her hands, were all illuminated, while beneath the swell of her bosom the lines of her figure grew indistinct and were lost in a mist of white draperies, upon which stray gleams of candle-light glanced as she moved. The presence of the worshipers dropped out of Hugh's mind; it was as if they were alone in the church and the appeal-

ing face, with its spiritual radiance, and the sublimated figure were his own vision. But the thought came to him that religion, the same power that had separated them on the day after their marriage, had exalted her here to show how complete was that separation, how useless the revival of his old love for her.

His heart was hot and rebellious, and he began to contend in thought for those rights he had left so willingly in abeyance during the years of his absence. He arraigned her bitterly for her infidelity to the vows they had spoken in this church, and reproached her and himself for the weakness with which they had yielded to Father Rapp's arguments. Her voice flowed musically through the church, and her words were vivid with spiritual life, sweet and comforting to her hearers. She did not dream of Hugh's presence, but the subtle influence of his hostile thoughts penetrated her soul, at last. An indefinable discouragement seized her, her words came less readily, and she wandered from her message. Her mind went back to the night of her marriage, or lingered upon the thought of Hugh or of little Helen.

But Trillis was no weakling, helpless before the rebellion of her own spirit; though she had no conscious knowledge that she was waging a conflict, her will was aroused and she made a valiant struggle for the victory over these wandering thoughts, and won it. She ceased to grope for ideas and to falter in their expression, but recovered herself with an elo-

quence and power which swept the hearts of her hearers into the current of her feeling. Hugh, in his turn, felt a subtle force attacking his mood of bitterness, and was softened and humbled. He left the church without being seen by Trillis, and resumed his ride in a new frame of mind.

There could be no question of Trillis' evangelistic gift and no doubt that she was happy in its exercise. Perhaps she herself felt that, even had they been free to live together in the domestic life, it would have confined her powers and have deprived her of an influence for good in the world. Perhaps she rejoiced in the freedom to use her gift. He deceived himself in thinking that she had been stirred to responsive feeling on the night of the storm. He had been mistaken in thinking that her face had betrayed the delight, and the surrender of a long-cherished love, when he had seen its image in the mirror that day in his father's chamber. He had revived his own passion under a delusion; Trillis was far removed from his claims, dwelling now in a spiritual atmosphere, in which his coarser nature could not sustain itself.

Two days later he saw her in another light,— one which proved her so wholly woman that the illuminated vision of the preacher in the log church seemed the figment of a dream.

Going rather earlier than usual to the cottage for his breakfast, he found the household in the greatest distress and confusion. Helen had been alarmingly

ill all night, and nobody had thought about getting breakfast; but there was fire and hot water, and Trillis was with the child, Sister Bena said, and if he could wait she would quickly prepare a meal for all. And sorely was it needed after such a night!

Hugh answered in the softened tone of sympathy; but his voice must have penetrated to the sitting-room, for Sister Drusia came out, her sweet old face blanched and haggard from the night of anxiety, but beaming.

"It's the strangest thing!" she boasted. "Who would have thought that child would hear Brother Hugh's voice, sick as she is? And nothing at all had she noticed until he spoke! 'It is Beppo I want,' she has said; and he should come, for this one knows well what it is she would have, and no one can deceive her. She is the strangest little thing!"

One of Helen's whims was to bestow a new name of her own invention upon those whom she honored with her especial affection. Hugh had received the title of "Beppo," and was only a little less impressed with it than Sister Drusia, who thought it one of the strangest things she had ever known.

Trillis sat in the darkened room with the child in her arms. The piteous lassitude of the little form, always so tense with restless life, the burning eyes ringed with unchildlike shadows, and the parched look of the tender lips, filled Hugh with pain and fear. Even Trillis, looking up at him with a heartbroken ap-

peal in her eyes, he scarcely saw, but fell on his knees before his little playfellow and murmured tenderly:

"Here is Beppo, Ladybird. Shall he take you in his arms?"

In the tension of last night's struggle with death, all lesser passions had given way and left Trillis only the primal one of mother-love. Hugh was now only Helen's father, and his relation to his child was far more important than any he had ever borne to herself. That he should feel it at last and should respond to it with this touching tenderness, as he seemed to do, so moved her that she lost all recollection of the interests of Harmonie, for which she had preserved her secret, and cried out in joy:

"You love her, then? You love her, Hugh!"

"Love her?" he replied in playful tenderness. "The little witch makes everybody love her!" And he took her into his arms.

The child nestled happily against his breast; then, opening her eyes and looking down at Trillis with a half-teasing, half-triumphant tone that startled the mother, she said:

"Beppo does love his Ladybird!"

Hugh laughed proudly. "There," he said, "you see we are old friends. You look so weary, and still so excited, why not leave her with me and go to your own room and rest? The night's anxiety has been hard upon you."

Trillis trembled at the solicitude of his tone, and

to hide her feeling moved obediently toward the door; but pausing there to look back at them, the sight of her child lying upon its father's bosom was more than she could bear. To see it there under any circumstances must have aroused the woman and the mother, but to see it after the night of suffering and threatened loss overwhelmed her.

There are many mystic elements in mother-love. Trillis, having felt them all, concluded they belonged also to the paternal relation and must lie in Hugh's heart, latent and unsuspected, but awaiting the revealing moment to spring into action. It seemed to her that this moment had come when his child lay in his arms, restored to him by the providence of God who had stricken her with death, and given her back to them in a new covenant of love and mercy. Trembling with secret joy, she returned to Hugh's side and waited for Nature to speak and enlighten him.

Hugh's attention was absorbed by the little restless sufferer and he did not notice Trillis' agitation. The slow moments went by, and she began to perceive that what she waited for was not to be. Hugh had no intuition of his relation to Helen; his love for her was no deeper than the child's power to amuse an idle moment. She was but a toy to him! Resentment and jealousy rushed over Trillis and she cried fiercely:

"Give her to me!"

Hugh yielded the little form to her with quick obedience. The adoring gaze she fixed upon the

child, her straining arms and heaving breast were eloquent of unaccountable emotions. He thought her like some wild creature — some mother of the woods when her young are threatened. Wild thoughts rushed upon him, and he took refuge in tremulous speech:

"You — you puzzle me, Trillis!"

"Oh!" she replied, and her eyes shot him a hostile glance. He felt it, and, amazed, he sought for some clue to her strange conduct. He missed the obvious one because his thoughts were set upon his love for Trillis, and he measured every act of hers by his own growing passion. He did not forget she had been his wife, but the fact could not have for him the importance that Nature had given it for her. In the ignorance of young desire he had served Nature's purpose, and she had thrust him aside. There was no secret bond between him and his own child to open his heart to the revelation. The moment of unaccountable emotions passed, leaving only a more poignant sense of his love for Trillis.

Helen, whom weakness only could have held so long docile to the will of others, began to fret for Hugh's arms.

"Stay with Trillis, who loves you, darling!" The mother, now all melting tenderness, pleaded with the child, but Helen persisted until she was humbly restored to her place upon Hugh's breast. Nestling there contentedly, she patted his encircling arm with

her tiny light hand and smiled up at him with unconscious witchery.

Hugh's heart ached at Trillis' pallor and look of suffering. Yearning to cherish her, he led her tenderly to the door, repeating his plea that she should leave the child to the care of others, and rest. His eyes glowed upon her now in willing revelation of his love, and his voice throbbed with it.

"We all love your little pet," he said. "I, because you do; yet — she is witch enough to charm me of herself. No wonder you are so fond of her, Trillis."

"Fond?" she echoed, "fond?" And in fear of her own weakness she fled from the room.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### DUMMER HANS' GIFT

For thou art more than life,
And if our faith should set
Life and my love at strife,
How could I then forget
I love thee more than life?

JOHN HAY.

After this interview Trillis studiously avoided Hugh. The sight of her child in its father's arms had aroused so many wild emotions, and so fierce a longing to claim his deepest love for the little creature, who seemed to have a strong instinctive affection for him, that she dared not trust herself in his presence.

By this time experience had impressed her with the power of the master passion, and she fled where she dared not fight. She who was wholly without prudence in the business of life, who threw her heart into the scale, followed impulse to the death, espoused her cause by instinct, and counted not the odds in any venture, resolutely disciplined herself in this case, and calmly weighed the issues of love, enabled to do so by the maternal passion which disputed her heart with it.

Now that Hugh had no instinctive love for his child,

no mysterious unrest of a heart deprived of its own, she was free to consider only Helen's welfare. And Helen was now being brought up in the best environment the mother knew. The world outside of Harmonie was a vast, unknown land where evil stalked, and over whose denizens hung the imminent doom of rejection and punishment upon the advent of Christ. To declare Helen's parentage was to exile her from the shelter of God's chosen, and to drive Hugh into a world for whose conflicts he was ill prepared. The mere urging of her heart, the fierce longing to have them both in the privacy of a united life, were not reasons to justify that step. Indeed, the fact that she so longed to take it made a typical woman's argument against it.

She built up her defenses against love by strengthening her position as evangelist and healer, convinced that, while her vocation could not fill her heart as it had filled Gertrude Rapp's, it might still shield her from the temptation of forbidden ties.

She spent much time in the study of the German mystics, upon whose theories the Rappites had built their creed, and whose works were almost the sole contents of the bookshelves at the Great House. One afternoon she sat in Father Rapp's garden reading a little fat volume, bound in pigskin. It was *The Interpretation of The Seven-Headed Beast and His Names of Blasphemy.* Though at first her mind had wandered bewildered through its labyrinthine pas-

sages, she had found the clue, and was now enchanted with the fervid and daring mysticism of the quaint German scholar.

She sat upon a bench, half-hidden among the lilac bushes at the bottom of the garden. She wore the flowing robe of white linen which George Rapp, with his unerring sense of visual values, had chosen for her ministrations to the world outside of Harmonie. Trillis had adopted it in the beginning with reluctance, shrinking from its suggestion of virginity, and rebelling against the thought of presenting herself to the world as one set apart from the weaknesses and sins of humanity.

But she wore it, now, with a certain ostentation; she wished Hugh to accept it as the sign of a barrier between them, and she hoped to keep her own heart obedient through its constant reminder of obligations and ideals that should be stronger than love.

Hugh, full of anxiety for Brother Laurence, whose condition had rapidly become alarming, followed her with the intention of claiming the help she had promised him at that first meeting after his return from Germany. For some time now he had seen that he was unwelcome at the stone house, even to his father, whom his filial love seemed not to reach at all, and to Theodor, who treated him with satiric courtesy or ill-concealed irritation. This unaccountable situation made it hard for him to tend his father, as he longed to do, or to penetrate the sorrowful mystery which

had darkened and was fast destroying Brother Laurence's life. What more natural than that he should come to Trillis for sympathy and advice.

But, when he saw her sitting there, a priestess in her robe of office, absorbed in the lore of her calling, and, seemingly, far removed from the pangs and temptations of feeling that constantly gnawed at his own heart, he hesitated to come nearer. While he stood at some distance, hidden by shrubbery, yet able to see her plainly, a flock of white pigeons suddenly appeared and circled above her head. The shadow of their wings upon her page attracted her attention, and she looked upward.

The leader of the flock swerved in his orbit, and, swooping downward, hovered an instant, then settled softly upon her shoulder. A moment later the entire flock was descending silently to the ground at her feet. She sat very still, the center of white wings and glancing bodies; presently she put up her hand so gently that the beautiful creature upon her shoulder submitted to be stroked by a light finger.

At this moment a door in the garden wall opened silently, and Dummer Hans, the feeble-minded fowlherd, stood within it, the sun shining full upon his white robe, and gleaming and glancing from the white wings and white bodies of restless fowls — ducks, chickens, geese, and pigeons, that crowded about him. He leaned toward Trillis, his strange, birdlike eyes glittering, and his pouted lips twisted in a sly smile.

"White Woman, White Woman, come!" he called in a strange, harsh voice, stretching his neck, and thrusting out his head as one of his own fowls might have done.

Trillis rose, and with the white pigeons wheeling around her, passed through the open door into the poultry yard. It was so shut in by wall and hedge and the stone fort, or granary, that never had she seen more of it than the fascinating clouds of white feathers which the wind sometimes blew over its boundaries into the village street. Often, in her childhood, had she watched the fowl-herd, in the gray of the morning or the gathering gloom of evening, leading his white flocks to or from the river pastures; but she, like all of the community, had respected Dummer Hans' dislike to human society, and had never intruded upon him.

She accepted his invitation to-day with pleasure, and looked about his domain with interest. The elfish architecture of the little cotes, and the shell-strewn streets, glittering white against the green background of the hedge and all veiled at times by the drifts of white feathers which were stirred not only by wandering breezes, but by the restless wings of pigeons, made a picture of fairy-land. Struck by its piquant beauty, Trillis smiled upon Dummer Hans, and exclaimed:

"It is so pretty!"

The idiot boy, repeating her words in his cackling voice, lifted the skirt of his smock, and, stepping

high, with a strange, stiff motion, began an antic dance. He wound in and out of the little wandering streets, the white pigeons circling above him in the still sunshiny air, and all the others of his flock at his heels,— the fowls lifting wings, peeping, and cackling, in an awkwardly rhythmic chorus. The clouds of white feathers floated over or among them, obscuring them at times, and giving to the whole scene the vanishing effect of a dream.

Hugh had silently followed Trillis and now stood in the doorway. When the dancers had made the circuit of the little village, and turned upon their steps to dance back again to Trillis, Dummer Hans saw the intruder and stopped with a cry of alarm and anger. Hugh stepped back into the garden, but his disappearance did not restore the former happy mood of the fowl-herd. He came slowly toward Trillis, dragging his long bare feet, and moving his bowed arms up and down as if to assist locomotion.

"Go, White Woman — go!" he whispered, and Trillis hurried through the door into Father Rapp's garden. Just as he closed the door after her, Dummer Hans hurled over it a small white object which, glancing from her arm, fell into the grass at her feet.

When Hugh had picked it up it proved to be an ivory miniature case. Upon one side of it was carved a crest and the letters L. von K. Opening it, they found that it contained a pair of portraits. One was the beautiful dreamy face of a young man; the

THE IDIOT BOY LIFTED THE SKIRT OF HIS SMOCK, AND, STEPPING HIGH, BEGAN AN ANTIC DANCE *Page 408*

other, that of a girl, not so beautiful in line and balance of the features, but full of an alluring charm. The delicate mouth lifted slightly at one corner in a bewitching smile, the expression was peculiarly vivid and individual, and the artist had tinted the eyes with a strange luminous blue.

"It is Brother Laurence and your mother," Trillis said, as they bent together over the little case. Her voice trembled from the tumultuous beating of her heart: for here was the face of Hugh's mother, a woman long dead, whose youth had died before her; and yet it was the face of Hugh's child, not only as she now appeared, but as she was to be in her coming womanhood! Could Hugh miss this striking proclamation of Helen's parentage?

He sat a long time gazing upon the portrait, not to trace new resemblances, but to strengthen and clear his own ideas of his mother. His face grew stern as he studied it, and presently he said, in the harsh and condemnatory tone of one who smarts under an old wrong:

"More than ever I wonder at his cruelty."

"Do not judge him, Hugh. You do not know all his motives."

Trillis was looking now at the portrait of Brother Laurence, and thinking that if one could exchange the dreamy half-shrinking expression for Hugh's look of ready decision, the father's face and the son's were much alike.

"Remember," she continued softly, "that his life has been very unhappy."

"That is it," he answered sharply. "His life has been a failure; he has suffered everything and done nothing. My father wrecked his own as well as my mother's life. He deserted his children, too — denied me his care, even his love."

"Do you think you can say 'deserted' and be just?" Trillis asked, with a strange double sense of condemning both Hugh and his father. It was like one of the heart-wringing dramas of the old Greeks which she had read with the schoolmaster, where Fate, relentless and never forgetting, visits the sins of the parents upon the children, and leads them through the same mistakes and penalties. She could not think of Leah von Korassel's sorrows without reviving her own. She, too, was a wife yielded to the community; she, too, a mother whose child was fatherless. The vivid face of the dead woman seemed familiar, as if it had hung over her in long hours of loneliness and rebellion.

"Why, think of it!" cried Hugh energetically. "I loved Brother Laurence better than any one! I used to follow him like a little faithful dog, happy to be near him. If my father had had a heart tender to the touch of nature, he must have loved his child! Even had he been ignorant of my existence, as I was ignorant that I had a father, he must have loved me instinctively. If he had loved my mother truly, that

love would in itself have drawn him to me. No, he was cruel to me, as he was to her. He did a monstrous thing! Cruel and monstrous because my mother did not consent to it! She was sacrificed!"

The saint in Trillis Daventry was not always uppermost; at this speech, the woman in her, stung by a sudden fierce jealousy of Hugh's pity for a dead wrong in the presence of a living and disregarded one, answered him swiftly:

"She is not the only one who has been sacrificed!"

Her bitter cry struck him like a blow. He gathered himself with a visible effort for self-control; but his voice shook, and his face was white.

"Trillis, what do you mean by that?"

He was looking at her now; at her proud vigorous figure in the sacerdotal robe, at her beautiful strong face, with its look of nobility and a subtle expression that seemed to exalt it above the faces of other women, and his heart trembled under his energetic decision. What was he that he should thus dare to wring the secret thoughts from such a woman? he was thinking; yet he set his lips firmly, and met her gaze with a glint in his blue eyes that told Trillis he meant to have the truth.

"I would know what you mean by that," he repeated.

"I mean that all the wives of Harmonie who gave up their husbands and children willingly were, nevertheless, in a sense, sacrificed to its interests."

"Do you mean that you, yourself, were sacrificed?"

"Yes."

"It is true. But I have not known that you thought so. It seemed to me that you made the sacrifice and gloried in it. I was a coward before Father Rapp; but I might have resisted even him had not you been so easily persuaded to give up our marriage. And you so eagerly embraced the vocation of preacher and healer, it was not strange I should think you had more of ambition than love."

"It was well you thought so," she said, with uncontrollable bitterness. "We will talk no more of this."

"But I will know what you felt that day, and whether you have suffered since because we yielded our rights in each other."

The masterful tone was sweet to Trillis; it held such suggestion of his right to know her heart, and such blissful hints of what it might be to yield the right and share all secrets with him. It cost her a supreme effort to answer coldly:

"It is of no consequence now."

"It is of more consequence to me than anything else in the world. Did you suffer from the separation?" His eyes controlled hers now, and she answered without a struggle:

"Yes."

"And now, Trillis?"

He leaned toward her. His voice was sweet and pleading, his eyes were fixed upon her full of infinite tenderness. For an instant there was nothing else in her world but that look of love; then she wrenched her gaze from his and answered coldly:

"We have no right to discuss these things."

His face paled; he shook his head, tossing the waves of his brown hair backward with the gesture she remembered from his childhood; and he lifted his square chin as he had always done at the instant of quick resolve.

"We are a man and a woman, with that between us which gives each the right to know the inmost heart of the other. Mine is bare before you. You are my wife; I call you so in my thoughts; I pour out my love upon you; I rejoice in the fact that I am yours, bound to you by the ordinance of God. I count our promise to Father Rapp as the word of helpless children, our obligation to Harmonie as a thing to be met and discharged, but never for a moment to be weighed with our marriage bond. As for the breaking of old ties, the leaving the community and the struggle with the world outside, I count them nothing beside your love,— if you still love me, Trillis."

He bent nearer her, and his eyes, confident and compelling, searched her face. The warm flush of answering emotion swept over it, her eyes betrayed her heart to him, and he came nearer until his lips had almost met her own.

"No, oh no!" she gasped, and rising, stood trembling before him. "Hugh, I asked you never to offer me that again! You promised you would not!" And her weakness was revealed in her agitated voice and averted eyes.

"But, if you love me, dear?" he replied in tender triumph. "Ah, sweetheart, love is stronger than we!"

He stood beside her now, and, with a mingling of passion and reverence that touched her more deeply than word or look, he kissed the sleeve of her gown. For that instant she was wholly forgetful of all other ties; she lifted her head, her eyes glowing, her lips parted, surrender and joy in her face, when she saw Father Rapp coming down the path toward them. There flashed into her mind that happy morning after the marriage, when he had appeared as now, to quench all her joy. A gray pallor swept her face; she grew suddenly haggard and old before her lover's eyes, as all the promises and duties which separated her from him rushed upon her mind, and she realized her infidelity to them and her weakness in the presence of his love.

"Hugh," she said with desperate decision, "talk no more of this. All that was between us is ended by our own act. We are bound by sacred promises, and we have duties to others that are even more binding. I am determined to be true to them."

She stood before him now, so strong in this mo-

ment of decision, so white and cold and serious, that her former soft yielding to his pleading seemed a delusion. She was no longer Trillis of the warm and responsive heart, but the prophetess of a stern and self-sacrificing faith, to whom the claims of love were folly. He bowed his head, accepting her decision with humility, and turned away to hide his suffering. When, however, he saw Father Rapp, and divined that his appearance had given Trillis the sudden strength to renounce love while in the very act of yielding to it, his stricken look disappeared in pride and anger.

It was a dramatic moment. Albeit no word was spoken, question and answer, suspicion and open defiance passed between Hugh and the leader of the Rappites. Hugh's suffering was so keen, his outlook upon life at the moment so hopeless, that open rupture with Father Rapp would have been a welcome outlet for his feelings. Divining this, the Rappite leader fell at once into his easy every-day manner, and seated himself upon the bench under the lilacs as one who is glad of the opportunity for a chat with friends. To Hugh, this pretense of the ordinary conditions of life between them at a moment of such emotional stress was unbearable, and he abruptly left the garden; while Trillis, having some of George Rapp's own qualities, quietly assumed her accustomed serenity of manner.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### MYSTERY AND CHANGE

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

TENNYSON.

Father Rapp and Trillis silently watched Hugh stride down the garden walk, the sun striking golden lights from his brown waving hair and illuminating the fine lines of his figure and virile back. Trillis herself felt no keener joy in his young strength and grace than the leader of the Harmonists.

"There goes a man, Sister! Harmonie will wax great and do great things under his guidance," he said, with placid casualness; but Trillis divined that he was merely leading up to an attack upon the secret of her relation to Hugh. Docile disciple as she was, her heart sprang to arms at once. She had sacrificed her love once more, but it should die by her hand; she would permit no other to strike a blow at it.

"Father," she said, her gray eyes flashing, "Father, I will not talk of Hugh. What is between us affects not the community nor yourself."

"I trust you both, Trillis," he said conciliatingly.

"Think not of us at all. I have something here that will interest you," she answered quietly, showing him the miniature case, and telling him how it had come into her possession.

She watched his face when he opened it, thinking of the power he had wielded in the lives of the man and woman pictured there, and had a passing wonder if the portrait of Laurence von Korassel in his youth, and the face of the woman who had been crushed under his ideals, would stir regrets in George Rapp's heart. To her surprise, he gave them but a cursory glance, as if for identification only, and turned his eyes quickly back to her own face.

"You say Dummer Hans gave you this?" he asked sharply.

"Yes."

"It was among other belongings of Leah von Korassel, locked in the cupboard of the Strong Room. If Dummer Hans could bring this away, he could bring other things. It is he who stole the money! God, I thank Thee!"

He was hoarse from excitement, and sprang up with the energy of joy, saying, "I'll go to tell Laurence, to restore him to his old place among us," and hurried out of the garden.

With the strength and eager haste of a young man, Father Rapp, his great, heavy shoulders thrown back, his leonine head and strong face thrust forward,

his eyes gleaming blue as steel, and his mouth softened into tender lines, strode through the village to the river, sprang into a skiff, crossed to the island, and, leaping on its shore as lightly as a boy, ran with mounting eagerness and delight to the Daventry mansion. It was silent, its doors set wide, many of its windows barred, looking not like a house deserted, but like one whose life had been pitifully narrowed and humbled.

Brother Laurence sat alone in the dark wainscoted dining-room, shrinking back in the shadow of a great arm-chair, in which his emaciated figure was so obscured there seemed little of him but the yellow-white face and the long, wasted hands. The quick step and abrupt entrance of Father Rapp startled him, and he sat bolt upright, staring at the intruder.

"Laurence! Laurence! O my friend, God is good! Let us praise Him!"

"George!" Brother Laurence cried,— surprise, fear, reproach, all rushing to expression in the one word.

Father Rapp halted; then, remembering, advanced again to his chair. The slight check to his joyous eagerness had given him time to get an impression of the change in his friend since their last meeting. The havoc of these years was startling. With a quick revolt at the ways of Providence, he bent over the figure in the chair and clasped the cold hands in his.

"Laurence, have you come to this? You?

Power, learning, aspiration, all wrecked, while a fool, — a poor, mindless, brutish fool,— eats and sleeps and works your ruin? It is not to be borne!" And he threw up his head defiantly.

"God is in Heaven," Brother Laurence answered in a dull, mechanical tone that sobered Father Rapp somewhat and restored his self-control.

"But now, Laurence," he said, when he was calm again, "we have discovered the thief who took the money years ago from the Strong Room."

He was interrupted by a cry, startled, piteous, woeful, from Brother Laurence, who sprang to his feet, turning his head from side to side like a trapped animal that looks for a way of escape. His shriek, echoing through the empty rooms, penetrated to the upper chamber where Theodor von Korassel sat in idle, melancholy reverie, such as no young man should know. He hastened to the dining-room, and, ignoring George Rapp, took his father in his arms.

"What is it? What distresses you, father?"

He spoke like one who soothes a frightened child, but Brother Laurence's agitation seemed to increase.

"Go away, Theodor," he gasped. "Come not into his presence. He has — O my son — he has discovered the thief!"

Theodor turned quietly to Father Rapp.

"Is it true?" he asked. His voice was gentle, and the look that swept his face should naturally have been joyous, because his father was to be freed from

shame; but George Rapp found in it a puzzling sweetness beyond joy,— something patient, brave and resigned.

"Yes, it is true."

"Then, father,——" Theodor gently forced the trembling body back into the chair, and stood up with his hand upon Brother Laurence's shoulder, as if waiting. Father Rapp eagerly made his explanation.

"Dummer Hans, the foolish fowl-herd, stole the box," he said.

Theodor wavered and slipped to his knees, with his face, suddenly whitened, bowed upon the arm of the chair.

"We have been the greater fools never to suspect him," Father Rapp continued angrily. "But now Laurence must return with me; and before all the community I will proclaim his innocence. There is nothing to be done with the fool. I wish I were not a bigger——" He paused. Brother Laurence's hand had found Theodor's bowed head.

"I will not go," he was saying to his son in the tone of one who reassures. "I will not be proclaimed innocent; no! I will stay here, and they must not intrude upon us."

He turned suddenly to Father Rapp.

"Do you hear, George? I will not go. You must come no more. The others shall not come. It shall be as before."

His tone had a petulant obstinacy in it; and

George Rapp, puzzled, hurt, to tell the truth, angered by this unaccountable reception of his news, stalked out of the room.

While returning to the river he heard a rasping voice singing heartily:

> "Oh the girls, oh the girls,
> Oh, the girls of Swabia!
> If you ask for blisses,
> None greater than this is,
> The hearty, sweet kisses
> Of the girls ——"

The voice went suddenly to pieces, and there at the turn of the path was Hanno, with fishing-rod and a string of bass, and such a look of a boy caught in mischief as tickled Father Rapp inwardly, though the culprit saw only his expression of righteous anger.

"Does this lascivious song echo the thoughts of a Rappite?" the offended leader asked sharply.

"I know not, Father; if many of the brothers have such thoughts they keep them close. But what would you? The human nature that is in a man must burst out some day, and I thought myself free, with no one nigh to be led astray by a light song. Think not of it, Father."

George Rapp passed the insolence by with a sigh,—his heart was too heavy for his usual secret enjoyment of Hanno's defenses, and too humble for reproof. To Hanno's surprise he walked beside him in

a long silence, and finally said, with some effort, half-musingly:

"Brother, you are an old man,— is your heart always as light as your words?"

"Between the first cry and the last, Father, the heart learns to bear. He who has neither wife nor child to grieve him, neither lands nor place to lose, may yet have memories to trouble him. I have carried a load at my breast since yesterday; true, I ate of Sister Martha's fried cakes, at *vesperbrod*, which are as brown and tempting and alas! as melancholy as her own fine eyes. Yet it may not have been the cakes. My mind has been harking back to a day of my youth, when I stood in the presence of the Emperor and he spoke to me — to me! I remember well how I strutted after that — I would be field-marshal in time, no less! And here I am, only old Brother Hanno, with no more behind me than before! Heigh-ho! But here comes Hugh across the river — that handsome fellow is always proof that there is good in living after all."

Hugh was still suffering the shock of Trillis' final refusal of his love, and when he saw Father Rapp waiting in the path to the Stone House, his eye flashed with resentment. But there was no answering anger in the serene and kindly face, nor in the voice greeting him gently.

"There is news, Brother, that will give you joy. It is now certain that it was Dummer Hans who stole

the money from the Strong Room. He climbed up the wall to a window, perhaps."

"O my father!"

Hugh's cry came from a swift but complete realization of all that Brother Laurence had suffered, in innocence. There followed instantly, in his thought, the complication of his own fate with the theft. Had not his father's supposed guilt, and the obligation which it imposed upon him, been the determining forces that had made him abjure his marriage?

"I must go to my father," he said, in unconscious echo of his own words on that day of renunciation.

"Wait. I, myself, have been to Laurence, but he will not permit me to proclaim the culprit or his own innocence. There is some mystery in that house. Hanno, have you not scented it?"

"Scented it? Yes. Found it out? No. Many strange things pass on this island. Count Theodor and his father wander at night, when they should sleep, and leave the world to the devil. I think Laurence is mad at last. It comes of the life here: loneliness, the want of work and hardship, and of a wife and children to keep his thoughts wholesome, have been too much for his soft nature. Last night I was watching the fires in the clearing — you know how Brother Martin has lumbago, and I took his task, though the thickhead has no more sense of tune than a bellows that blows and knows not what is to come of it! In the gray morning, Theodor came sneaking

to the hollow cottonwood, which is so great that Martin once fattened his pig within it. He knelt, and seemed to search for something inside the trunk, when Brother Laurence came creeping upon him. When Theodor saw that, he threw up his arms as if he said, 'What use?' and he dashed into the thicket with Brother Laurence following so fast that both were gone when I had come to the cottonwood tree. Now, if you will tell me why they did this, I will tell you why the devil is red!"

After some fruitless discussion of the mystery, Hanno was directed to return to the Stone House, and Hugh and Father Rapp crossed the river together. They took the path along the waterside and walked for some time in silence. The river was glowing with the reflections of the sunset, and even the line of forest against the sky and the nearer foliage of Illinois were glorious with color. The willows shut them from view of the highroad and the fields, and they insensibly yielded their troubled hearts to the calm and beauty of the hour.

Other sorrows besides this one of Laurence von Korassel's condition were chafing the soul of the Rappite leader, and still others, inevitable and bitter, lay in wait for him.

The old tranquil life of Harmonie was pervaded of late with a secret restlessness. It was as if the currents from the open sea, invading a quiet harbor, had set all the barks, at anchor there, heaving with the

undertow which was drawing them once more toward the regions of change. The Rappites were growing old, and use was taking the place of hope in their desires. No longer compelled to labor incessantly, as in the first years of the community, they had too much leisure for remembering, and their thoughts went back to the family life, so strong in the German heart. They had given up the marriage relation in their youth, when it meant scarcely more than the sexual bond. In doing so, they had not reckoned with the affections, which outlive the passions, nor with their human dependence and need of companionship. They had not foreseen the daily sacrifice of that sympathy, interdependence, and mutual interest which gradually become the reality of marriage. They found themselves nearing the end of their days, with a longing for the love of husband or wife keener than any conquered passion of their youth.

George Rapp understood this secret infidelity to the leading tenet of Harmonie, with tender human sympathy. He himself was old, and may have had his own hours of loneliness. At any rate, he met this new difficulty in a new spirit. In earlier days he would have opposed his will, his eloquence, his divine authority to this subtle evil, and would have conquered it inexorably. Now, he prayed and waited, and was ready to receive the help God sent him. It was in the person of a Mr. Flower, the agent of the great philanthropist, Robert Owen, of Lanark, Scotland, who

wished to purchase the village and estate of Harmonie for a communal experiment of his own.

"It is the first time I have not acted openly," Father Rapp said to Hugh, after this matter of a sale and removal to Pennsylvania had been opened between them. "I see in this change a means of reviving interest in all hearts, and so circumventing the disaffection which seems to have come out of the air upon us. Things do not go well of late, Brother."

Something in Father Rapp's expression, some hint of weariness and failure, touched Hugh's heart, and he replied cheerily:

"When we are in a new place, a less enervating climate, with nearer markets, and can transplant there all the successes of Harmonie, leaving behind all mistakes and failures, these troubles will melt away."

"But there are many who will not wish to go. Brother Fabian has said to me: 'The strength of our manhood is here in the buildings of our village, and in our well-tilled farms, and our dead are here.'"

"It is an old man's view."

The young man's words stopped in his throat. Some change in the face before him, portentous as the softening of the sky at sunset, or the mellowing of the year at the approach of winter, silenced him.

Presently Father Rapp spoke in his ordinary tone:

"It will take a strong hand to guide us in these new waters, Hugh,— you will be our pilot?"

Hugh laid his heart bare. "Father," he said, "I

love Trillis. I would give her my life, but she will not have it."

The quick tears sprang to the old man's eyes. He walked in silence, and his thoughts were not of Hugh and Trillis. Only by the softening of his face and the wistful sweetness of the lips might one guess that they were, nevertheless, of the human heart and its mysterious ties.

"My son," he said, "this kind of suffering has come to many before you; it is bitter, and heavy to be borne; nevertheless, when a man assumes it willingly for the sake of higher things, God remembers him."

"I can not pretend that, Father. I will give my best to Harmonie, but it is only what Trillis will not have."

"I will accept it for Harmonie," said the leader of the Harmonists, with quick decision.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### OTHO'S STORY

> Thy hand is clasped in mine — we lean together —
> Henceforward, through the sad or shining weather,
> I shall not walk alone.
>
> ROBERT BUCHANAN.

Great Peter was leaving the village in the early dawn. He was driving in a small light wagon, with a leather canopy over the rear, a vehicle of stout Rappite make, yet lacking somewhat in finish and beauty. He neither whistled nor sang, because his heart was heavy. On the night before, as they had sat together on the fence of the cow-yard when the cattle were fed, he and Otho Rapp had had a disagreement. Now, when there are no material cares in one's life, no clash of ambitions, no privations of one's own and unequal advantages of one's neighbor to make one miserable, one may nurse a difference with one's friend to astonishing proportions. The cause of the quarrel had been no cause.

The two young fellows, for want of other topics, had fallen into a discussion of love, as they had done at other moments of mutual confidences. Upon this occasion they had touched upon an unfamiliar phase

of it — parental love — which, by Rappite usage, was held as but little less dangerous than the love between the sexes. Now, both of Great Peter's parents were dead, which gave a certain license to his ideals, while Otho Rapp's mother and grandfather were alive and active in the community life. Thus Otho was held down to a practical view of a relation susceptible of an alluring, poetic treatment.

Peter had held that a mother's love outlasts change, and is not affected by vows or other limitations imposed by the human will. He gave several instances to prove his claim. There was Sister Tamar, who used to call in her big son, Brother Luther, and give him gingerbread boys, as if he were still a child; and Sister Elizabeth, who shut herself up in her chamber after Brother Odo Wendel's death, and would not be comforted, though she had lived for years in the same lodging-house, and never so much as called him "son."

Otho had argued, to Great Peter's surprise, that these incidents proved nothing; that the woman who gave up motherhood could not look backward upon it without sin.

"A vow is a vow," he urged hotly, "and as binding upon mothers as upon any one. True Rappites hold fast to the teachings, and God cleanses faithful Rappite hearts from all carnal passions."

Before they knew it, the friends were contending with harsh voices and flushed faces. Peter could

not understand, this morning, why the matter had been of so much importance to himself. And he now knew what had made Otho so angry; the subject had pressed home, and every one of his own foolishly-persistent ideas had torn open an old wound in the heart of his friend.

"Would I could swallow my words, or make him forget them!" Peter sighed, as he turned into the great road, and found Otho awaiting him by the roadside.

"It is a fair day, Brother," said Otho, an embarrassing red stealing over his handsome face.

"Yes, Brother, it is fair," Peter replied, blushing as hotly.

"You go to the cross-roads settlement, Brother?" Otho asked, looking over the horse's head with far-away eyes.

"It is to fetch Sister Gertrude Rapp from a ministration to the world," Peter answered, as if he were saying a lesson — a hard one.

"I would I had been sent," said Otho; "but I was not."

"No; but — if you will, Brother,——"

"You may be reprimanded by Father Rapp."

Peter tossed the lines for answer, and sprang to the ground with animation.

"Climb up, Brother, and hasten. The way is long, and she will be waiting for you."

Otho took the driver's seat and the lines; then he

hesitated for an instant, in which the hot blushes seemed to devour his curl-shaded brows.

"I was wrong last night, Peter. I ask your forgiveness," he said humbly.

"'Tis nothing, Otho; only — I was too sharp in my speech. I would you could forget it."

The two fair, boyish faces lifted at the same instant, two pairs of suffused eyes met and exchanged glances; then the friends parted, and Peter went whistling back to Harmonie.

Upon the steps of a little log church in a clearing, Sister Gertrude Rapp awaited the wagon which was to take her home. The leaves of a great yellow birch tree beside the church door covered her all over with its veil of beaded shadows. She was a slender woman, with a graceful figure and smooth fair face. Her banded hair was of a pale unfaded gold, her lips had their tint of fresh scarlet, her eyes their early blue, unclouded by years and sorrows, yet "youthful" was not the word to describe her. The years had faded her undeniable beauty but little, but they had left something out of the process — the softness, perhaps, and charm of change, and the pathos of decay.

As she sat — her cap fitting snugly around her small head, with only a satiny band of yellow hair glowing mildly in the light filtering through the frills, her firm throat rising from her white kerchief and showing a noble line from chest to the squared,

firm chin, her level gaze watching the road without eagerness or impatience, her long hands clasped placidly in her lap — Otho Rapp drove through the trees and halted at the steps. His eyes burned in his pallid face with suppressed excitement; his lips were shut, his throat swollen with riotous pulsations, for his heart was leaping with expectation and fear. He did not greet his mother, and he left her to climb alone to the seat behind, where she sat in the shadow of the canopy, upright and silent. He felt, rather than saw, her attitude, and imagined something hostile in it, which drove him to impulsive speech.

"It was not I who was sent; it was Brother Peter Gurst," he said hurriedly. Her quiet voice answered from the back of the wagon:

"But it is you who have come."

"Yes, I wanted to come. I wanted to be alone with you." The rapid sentences ended on a tremulous note.

"Yes." The voice was sweet, but still unshaken. Otho turned quickly, and flung the next words at her.

"I wanted it because you are my mother."

"Yes," she said again, looking at him with a soft impersonal interest. This stung Otho to desperation.

"Peter had said — yes, and others say it, too — writers, makers of songs, the Bible, even — that there is nothing like the love of a mother, nothing which outlasts everything, overcomes everything. Oh, it is

a lie! Do I not know?" He choked upon his words, and turned again to the front of the wagon.

"What is it that you know, Brother?" spake the calm voice, its very coolness and unruffled sweetness stinging him like whips.

"I will tell you what I know!" he cried, letting go his grip on his emotions, turning again, his face empurpled with anger, and hurling his words at her where she sat so serenely self-controlled in the shadow, her hands still clasped loosely in her lap, her form still held erect, with unwearied ease, in the swaying vehicle.

"I know what a child can suffer — a little child, so young that one does not remember when the suffering began. In the night, waking to find himself alone; in the day, when he has pain that should be soothed, or only that longing for his mother that is always with him. Not that others were unkind,— there were kindnesses enough, even kisses, and little gifts — but not — but never from his mother! He could not understand, he was too young. And when he was older he could understand no better; he has never understood why there should always have been that thirst in the heart of the child, and never anything in the mother to satisfy it."

There was no answer from the back of the wagon, and, choking down his indignation, Otho chirruped to his horse, and they went on in silence. Presently Gertrude Rapp leaned forward, and her hand fell

softly upon Otho's shoulder. He trembled under it, but did not turn.

"You know what the child feels," she said; "I, what the mother feels." Her voice was still too smoothly sweet to chime with his mood. Her words revealed nothing, and Otho guessed at no deep feeling under them.

"I did not dream that you were unhappy, that you wanted me," she said; and for the first time her voice quivered with a little wistful cadence that softened the son's heart.

"Mother, I should not blame you," he answered more calmly; "only you can not think what it was like. You so cold, so beautiful, so saintly — it was like having an angel for a mother, one too high and holy to hear when a little boy crept after her sometimes, whispering, 'Mother, mother,' to her shadow on the pavement."

"Otho! my son!" she cried, bending to touch her lips to his cheek — swiftly, timidly, as a girl might kiss her lover for the first time.

Otho sat still, entranced by the caress and the melting of her voice. Had she claimed him at last? But she held herself so long, half-inclined toward him, but silent, that he turned to her. She was praying. Her hands were extended until they almost touched him, but they were tensely clasped, as if by a withholding will; and her beautiful eyes, uplifted in prayer, saw him not. In her earnestness, the appeal welled to

her lips in words, whispered at first, but swelling until Otho heard and understood them.

"Forgive me my weakness," she prayed. "Thou knowest how I have striven to conquer the carnal heart. Count not this moment of yielding when my son called me 'mother.' Count rather the hundred victories I have won over my woman's heart in the past, and give Thou me strength for another. Make the call ring so loud in my ears that I shall hear not the voice of my child. Make my mission so powerful, so great to my soul that I shall remember not his suffering."

The fervor of the evangelist was mounting in her spirit. Otho, who knew the meaning of that rapt look and that swift, on-rushing volume of eloquence, turned, and gave his attention to the horse. Presently the prayer was ended, and Gertrude Rapp sat for a long time silent behind her son. But before they had entered the village she had recovered her serenity of bearing and had even exhorted Otho to crush the affections of the carnal man in his heart, and to strive for the holier spiritual condition of the zealous Harmonist.

The young man, his heart full of bitterness, listened with the semblance of respect; but his mother's words could never move him again. Simple, direct, with an irresistible, primitive strength of will and an unerring grasp of the basic facts of life, Otho Rapp was not to be bewildered by mysticisms, not to be diverted

from his path by eloquence. He had tested his mother's heart and found its natural feelings dried up or turned into unnatural channels. He had been prepared for the discovery; nevertheless, it had wounded him, and it had planted the seed of revolt in his mind.

The vineyards were some distance from the village, and lay along the first rise of the land behind the corn-fields that fringed the river. There, when the grapes were ripe, the fading olive slopes, fruited with the purple harvest, were animated by the moving figures of the Rappites, in the rich blues and yellow-browns of their Old-World dress, and the great, white, wide-spreading hats that shaded their cheerful rosy faces.

This year the river was low, its beaches and sand-bars " out " and basking in the sun; and the gathering of mussel shells for lime went on at the same time as the vintage. The sisters, not being fitted for wading the river or loading wagons, were detailed to the vineyards, while the brothers had the more novel and interesting task of shell-gathering in the river below.

This arrangement changed the character of the music with which the Rappites lightened all their labors, and they sang antiphonal hymns and plaintive old folk-songs with refrains, the feminine voices floating down from the slopes to fuse with the rich melody of bass and tenor soaring up to meet them in the golden air between.

The rows of grapes started at the edges of the narrow corn-fields and ran up the hills in wide shaded alleys, from which it was easy to see the charming picture of the shell-gatherers at their work. It was done in delicate and elusive colors, with blues that melted into grays, grays that shaded to violet, or shimmered and became white, and whites that caught the sun-rays and were gold. The sand-bars spread, smooth and pale yellow in the midst of the rippling waters, and the divided river wound among fields of ripened corn and fertile rounded hills, until, uniting again, it was lost in the shimmer that fused it with the horizon.

The brothers stood upon the bar, knee-deep in the water, while they loaded the wagons with the silvery shells. The excited horses, their rich coats brilliant from the wetting, champed upon their bits and tossed their heads as they strained through the river, puzzled and irritated by the resistance of its sandy bed; they came prancing into the field where the shells were piled to dry and await the leisure of the winter when they were to be burned in the lime furnaces.

Between the songs, the shouts and laughter of the jocund brothers came up the slopes to the vineyards, and the wholesome-hearted sisters had an indulgent sympathy with their merriment.

"Look you!" cried little Sister Lanie, holding her sides as she rocked with laughter, "Brother Jung has lifted his shovel too quickly, as is his way, and he has

spilled its load upon his own shoulders. See what a flood of muddy water streams down the front of him, and I like it not that Brother Hanno brushes him off so kindly! Would that we might hear what old sayings he offers so gravely! Brother Jung's face is purple — I can see it — and his cheeks all puffed with the angry words he holds back; and Hanno's smooth tongue is teasing him well, I know."

"Ah, that is too bad, now!" said Sister Martha, the pessimist; "Brother Jung will have a cold and perhaps a pleurisy that he will not get over — At least, he will have a stained smock that will be no easy washing. I see not why you laugh, Sisters; have you forgotten how often the scoff returns to torment the scoffer?"

"Have a care, Martha," said Sister Tamar admonishingly, "or you may find yourself suddenly a muck of mud like Brother Jung, with a deadly pleurisy and a soiled smock. Though I know not whence it is to come, in this hillside, dry as last month's loaf."

"Laugh if it pleases you, Sisters," Martha replied, with sore dignity; "but poor Brother Jung will cough!"

While the older sisters grouped themselves in pairs and picked the grapes of neighboring rows that they might have the pleasures of companionship, Sister Yetta Schindler had quietly slipped away to a more remote aisle of the vineyard, where she might have the rare experience of being alone. She was a tiny

creature, who bore herself with such natural dignity and decision that she was not called "little," though there was no one at Harmonie who did not look down upon her smooth, blond head. Her face was smooth, also, pink and white as a baby's, and had an arch sweetness of expression. Her eyes were the large, bright, pale-blue, innocent eyes of a German maiden, and only the few who knew Yetta best had seen them flash sharp as steel when her will was aroused, or surprised them melting and glowing with tenderness. To-day these eyes were full of a girl's dreams, and all her little, delicate face was mysteriously sweet. She loitered at the grape-picking, leaning backward at times against the background of yellowing leaf and purple cluster, and looking off across the river to the blue hills of Illinois, whose outlines, obscured by autumn hazes, were a fit horizon for her world of dreams.

Trillis' rich voice, soaring upward from the foot of the vineyard, began a song. The words were by Schiller, whose name was new upon the lips of fame at that time. Hugh had brought his works from Heidelberg, and Frederic Richardt had set *The Alpine Hunter* to music.

> "Wilt thou not, thy lamblings heeding,
> (Soft and innocent are they!)
> Watch them on the herbage feeding,
> Or beside the brooklet play?"

Trillis sang, Yetta falling dreamily in upon the

second line, and the successive aisles of the vineyard yielding each its well-trained voice to swell the melody. Then, clear and sweet, from the sand-bar, the beautiful tenor of Otho Rapp answered in the refrain:

"Mother, mother, let me go
O'er the mount to chase the roe!"

It seemed to Yetta that the plaintive, heart-searching strain came straight to her row of vines, and she lifted a glowing face to sing the next stanza. Her voice rose above the others, sweet and fluting like a bird's; as she leaned out of the shadows, her maiden's bosom and soft throat swelled with new emotions expressing themselves in the song:

"Wilt thou not, thy herds assembling,
Lure with lively horn along?
Sweet their clear bells tinkle, trembling,
Sweet the echoing woods among!"

And again the tenor, plaintive, longing:

"Mother, mother, let me go
O'er the wilds to chase the roe!"

For some reason the other singers fell silent, and the two, Otho and Yetta, sang on alone. Subtle meanings throbbed between the river and the vineyard, meanings beyond the simple words or the sweet and touching melody. Otho, leaning upon his shovel, boldly lifted his head and sent his voice up, question-

ing, pleading, without shame, to the leafy slope whence Yetta answered him. When the last refrain was sung, he threw down his shovel, splashed through the water, and went up the hill without a thought of anything in the world but Yetta. He found her among the vines, poised like a startled doe.

"Is it so, Yettakin?" he asked, as soon as he had reached her.

She put her hand behind her and let him clasp it. Then softly, over her shoulder, her face still turned from him, she replied:

"It is so, Otho. The song told me."

"Is it then so new, little one? It is old with me, as old as we are."

Then Yetta turned and gave him all her lovelit face.

"I knew, I think," she said; "but I did not know I knew."

Otho slipped to his knees, and kissed the hem of her Rappite skirt.

They were sitting together among the vines when Father Rapp confronted them. Otho sprang up and met the suspicion of his eyes with a look so open and so bold, that Yetta, rising, stepped quietly to his side, and looked up at the leader of the Rappites, grave, but fearless.

"What is this I see?" George Rapp asked.

"I am glad you have seen it, Grandfather," Otho answered steadily.

Father Rapp, stricken by that name, sighed and made no reply.

"There has been no concealment. This has but just come to Yetta and me, this knowledge that we love each other. Ten minutes ago we had not spoken of it. We should have told you as soon as possible, for we are not ashamed."

"Have you forgotten that you are Harmonists, and that this thing is forbidden?"

"We can not remain Harmonists. God has permitted us to love each other, and we must leave you, although it will wring our hearts, and go into the world together."

The quiet words, the grave assured manner of Otho, and little Yetta's look of decision, stilled persuasion upon George Rapp's lips. He was now no longer angry. He looked at them steadily for a moment, then his gaze grew soft and wistful. Otho was big, and blond, and handsome, like John Rapp, the son who had died in the flower of his manhood, and, in addition, he was bold, decided, and forceful. "Grandfather" he had said, and his voice had been gravely tender. But as head of the community he made one more effort to save these two to Harmonie.

"Otho and Yetta, I charge you to obey the voice of conscience."

"But conscience does not bid us to remain here, where we should always be breaking the law in our hearts," Otho replied.

Yetta lifted her small childish head, with a light of calm resolve in the face that had grown womanly with a startling rapidity, and she said:

"Father, we go away. Let us not part in anger."

Without replying, Father Rapp went slowly down the long aisle of grape-vines, his head bent, his figure drooping, like that of an old man, weary of struggle and conscious of his burden of care.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### REVELATION THROUGH SORROW

I would not be a woman like the rest,
A simple woman who believes in love,
And owns the right of love because she loves.
MRS. BROWNING.

Hanno sat in the front room at the schoolmaster's house, his foot swathed in bandages redolent of aromatic liniments, and his face beaming with the interest of a new rôle, for he had been caught in the fall of a tree he was chopping and had wrenched and slightly crushed his foot and ankle. His injury was not very painful; he was back again at the village, without having deserted his post on the island, of which he was weary; he had Sisters Ermengarde and Trillis to nurse him, and all the brothers and sisters of the community to make much of him and his accident.

Sisters Lanie, Margreta, Martha, and Brunhild came together to visit him, each arrayed in her meeting dress and high starched cap, and bearing gifts for him. Sister Lanie's was a red silk handkerchief of Rappite weave, upon which she had embroidered his name; Sister Martha's, a laboriously constructed bouquet of purple and white immortelles. Sister

Brunhild carried a little basket, daintily covered and emitting spicy odors. They advanced in turn, with gentle ceremoniousness, and shook Brother Hanno's hand. Sister Margreta, being an unmarried woman with a secret code of conventionalities and delicate compunctions, brought only a bunch of thyme, sweet marjoram, and other scented herbs from the garden of Number Three. Inarticulate natures have sometimes an underground stream of poetry that keeps the heart fresh, though it never sees the light. Perhaps this dumb and dull old nun likened the herbs to her own dreams and sentiments, which, though they had not the power to bloom, had yet a charm as subtle as fragrance.

"How well you look, Brother, for all your bad luck!" said Sister Lanie cheerily. Whereupon Martha, the pessimist, shook her head.

"He is excited, Sister; that is why you think he is looking well. It is unnatural after all he has borne. Oh, no! False strength is bad; it deceives one, and worse is sure to follow. I have brought you some everlasting flowers, Brother. I gathered some yesterday from the beds at the graveyard gate, and I think them so comforting. They last so long, while our time runs away, as the watchman says."

Brother Hanno's countenance changed under this speech. He was conscious of having ignored some pain in the determination to enjoy his eminence in the public attention. Perhaps he was much worse

than he had thought. Sister Brunhild, watching him with tender solicitude, advanced with her basket. "I have brought spiced cakes and honey-kuchen and the little seeded crackers that you love, Brother. Glad I am to see you look so able to enjoy them; and I am not surprised. It is not as if you were a feeble man, to sink under a thing like that!"

"I am young enough to throw it off, as you say, Sister. I will show you that I appreciate your cakes. 'He that is ashamed to eat is ashamed to live,' as they said in France."

"Is it well, think you, Sisters, that one who has been in such danger should be eating sweets?" asked Sister Martha admonishingly.

Margreta had been thinking that it was a bold thing for an unmarried woman like herself, as Sister Brunhild was, to make a present of cakes to an unmarried man, so she said very stiffly:

"Spiced cakes are like to give one heart-burn. I should not think them good for Brother Hanno."

"Little do you know about men," said Sister Lanie, with the unbearable laugh of superior knowledge. "Eating is good for them always."

Margreta turned away, flushed and wounded, but unable to reply. She silently laid her bunch of herbs on the window-sill, for she could not present them now. Their fragrance stole into the room, and she might have followed the allegory, and comforted herself with the thought that the feeling which life had dis-

regarded and left hidden in her heart might yet make its sweetness felt in other lives as subtly as the neglected herbs their perfume.

"Eat another of the anise squares, Brother; I made them for you," said Brunhild, who was looking upon old Hanno at this moment merely as an object of the coddling and comforting that she delighted to bestow. He tasted the little cake, and looked into her eyes with his old impudent gallantry.

"That it is that makes them so good to me," he said. She flushed angrily and drew back behind Sister Martha, and was glad no one could hear the fluttering of her foolish heart. He looked at her and muttered: "To warm is not to burn oneself;" but Brunhild did not notice the apology.

Sisters Ermengarde and Trillis came in, and the women seated themselves in a semicircle before Hanno's chair. The room was large and sunny, brilliant with cleanliness and adorned with flaming sage, nasturtiums, and a gorgeous variety of late-blooming flowers. The comfortable, matronly figures of the Rappite sisters, famous for their good health, were molded in blue bodices and snowy folds of kerchiefs. Their rosy faces, ripened by sun and wind, had a lofty sweetness of expression, and the white light sifting through the cap frills gave a touch of cloistered innocence.

Little Sister Lanie, dark and vivacious; Ermengarde, the community nurse, with her strength and

tenderness, her wholesome roses, and her crisp black ringlets peeping from under her cap; Margreta, big, blond, and dull, yet mysteriously appealing; Martha, handsome and gloomy, with brown hair and eyes of a color; and Trillis and gentle Brunhild, all smiled upon him, all listened deferentially to his account of the accident in the clearing.

Trillis bloomed among the older women like a flower; her youth, her refinement, and the suggestion of the mystic and the aspiring, setting her apart from them. And yet she was included with them by that hint of something missed out of life, a wistful look which was sad and patient and devoted; for had they not laid this precious thing upon an altar? It was not for Brother Hanno to interpret this common expression, but it was a great advance in heart-culture for him to feel its sadness.

Upon this group burst Brother Jung Scheller, panting and quivering with excitement.

"Brother Laurence is gone! He has left the island!" he cried. "His son, Count Theodor, has searched it over in vain! He is gone! Brother Laurence is gone!"

There was a chorus of questions, and Brother Jung repeated his news from every point of interest until it was reduced to insignificant details.

"I met Sister Bena on my way hither, and what do you think? She would not listen to my news at all, because she has missed her adored baby, and can

think of nothing else until she is found — asleep under somebody's bed! It is ever the fault of women to lose sight of big things, being blind with their own small affairs."

One, at least, of his audience escaped his reflections upon her sex. Trillis, at the mention of the missing child, had rushed from the room and sped down the street toward the cottage. She met Sister Bena on the way, and, between fright and reproach, cried:

"Where is Helen? How have you lost her?"

Sister Bena was not one to accept indignity, even from a mother in whom fear has awakened the tigerish quality of maternal love, so she answered in severe tones:

"Helen was playing in the yard while I was stirring apple-butter. When I missed her I thought only that she had strayed into Hugh's work-room, and was sleeping there upon his coat, as she so often does."

Having made her defense, she suddenly recognized the suffering in Trillis' face, and continued in a more sympathetic tone:

"She will be found; do not fear. I go now to Sister Lanie's basket-shop — Helen loves to be there. And you should go to the river pastures where Dummer Hans herds his fowls; she had ever a liking to follow him about. Hugh has gone to the north end of the village, and others are searching. Father

Rapp returns from Vincennes this afternoon — he will come within an hour — and then ——"

But it was not possible for Trillis to listen longer. She sped down the street toward the river, and, as she ran, cried out against herself that she had intrusted her child to others, and had brought this calamity upon it. For at Brother Jung's announcement, fear had fastened upon her heart. She felt that some threatening fate had overtaken Helen, who, even at this moment, might be pleading for the help that could not reach her, might be suffering or dying, somewhere, alone.

The pastures lay smoothly spread along the edge of the glinting river. The quiet vineyards and orchard slopes basked round them in the warm autumn sunshine. The depletion and fading of foliage, the purple and gold of blossoming weeds, the drifts of Michaelmas daisies, the tempered blue of the sky, and the azure shadows of the Illinois hills gave a tranquil melancholy to the scene. But the river, ruffled by vagrant breezes, and humming along its winding course, seemed to escape the influence of the waning season, and still to be in the high tide of the year.

Trillis searched the pastures at a glance; saw the groups of white fowls nipping the still succulent grasses, chasing insects, pecking at the seed-pods in the weed patches, sporting or dozing or quarreling; saw the restless drifts of white feathers and the dip of white bodies and waving of white wings of

pigeons overhead; saw the white-clad figure of Dummer Hans stretched upon the sunny bank,— but no child. The landscape intruded itself upon her attention,— how beautiful, how peaceful, how tender! There could be no danger for a child in all the circle of this gentle region, unless ——

The river darkened suddenly under the shadow of a passing cloud. It seemed to still its busy hum, and to show itself for an instant sullen and sinister. The conviction seized her that it held the secret of the lost child; Helen lay under the treacherous waters that had quenched the brightness of her young spirit in wanton cruelty. She turned and dragged herself, hopeless, and already enfeebled by her loss, back to the village.

The Harmonists were all astir, searching in every direction for the schoolmaster and their beloved little ward. A band of brothers was preparing to drag the river. She followed them and sat through the waning afternoon, watching with tearless eyes their solemn and fruitless quest. They did not abandon it until nightfall, when searching parties were more carefully organized and distributed over the estate of Harmonie and its neighborhood. Otho Rapp and Hugh went with Theodor von Korassel to the Illinois shore to search the swamps and forests there, Brother Laurence's known antipathy to Harmonie, and the fact that a boat was missing from the island, making it seem probable that he had fled in that direction.

No one could account for the disappearance of the child at the same time as the schoolmaster's; and, their conjectures being entirely without a reasonable basis, the old brothers and sisters ignored reason altogether, and pursued the search under the spur of vague and fantastic fancies directed by the slightest omens, and subjected to a weary alternation of groundless hopes and despairs.

Sister Bena, though her heart was torn with anxiety for her foster child, was yet awake to the claims of that larger love which had governed her life. She saw that Trillis, desperate with grief and remorse, was likely at any moment to proclaim her motherhood, without regard to the result. Seeing this result through the eyes of George Rapp, Bena considered nothing but his interests, and set herself single-mindedly to protect them. She guarded Trillis from the curious, humored and soothed her, averting exposure many times during that sorrowful day; and at night went with her, under the escort of Brother Martin, to the island, where the mother, grasping at straws in her distress, had some hope of finding a trace of the child.

They searched the house and outbuildings once more, and came at last to the river bank, on the Illinois side, where Trillis had kept her first tryst with Hugh. The night was balmy as June. The odor of ripening vegetation, of concentrating plant juices and drying fruits made the air sweet. The

wasting of foliage gave a delicacy to the mass of tree groups and accented the haunted look of their shadows. The spirit of silence possessed the night — gentle and tranquil. The grief of this lonely young mother, the anxiety of all these wandering parties of Rappites, flashing the light of lanterns into the holy places of woods and fields, the sound of twigs breaking under their feet, the melancholy murmur of their voices, their occasional shouts and far-borne replies, even the scurrying feet of little natives of night and the woods that fled before them, seemed not to break the charmed stillness, nor to jar upon the calm, all-enfolding benevolence of the hour. Even Trillis, sitting upon the bank, watching for the river to toss at her feet the little body of a drowned child, was unconsciously restrained by its silence and tenderness.

She knew that on the Illinois side, in the wild forest or the swamps, Hugh was searching for his father and his child. His father, who had renounced him, had refused him love and companionship in his helpless childhood; and his own daughter, who grew every day more like himself, repeating in miniature the turn of his head, the trick of his gestures, and numerous little characteristics of his personality — whom he fondled every day with irresponsible affection, and knew not for his own.

Trillis recalled the times when she had seen Hugh and his child together, and her iron mood of despair and revolt melted at the remembrance of Helen's pref-

erence for him, and all the pretty imperious ways in which she had expressed it.

Grief acts, sometimes, as a powerful mental stimulant. Trillis, with an energy of thought that amounted almost to inspiration, sifted the facts of her life and its relations, freeing it from all obscurities and half-truths. In that vigil beside the river she broke for ever every bond of education, association, or religious tenets. She freed herself from Father Rapp and Harmonie, from her vocation as evangelist and healer, and stood up a wife by the sacredness of love, a mother by the blessing of God upon her wifehood.

Though she felt that her vision had cleared too late, her sense of the paramount obligation of motherhood had come when there was no longer any child to claim her love and her care, her surrender to the wife's bond when the neglect of her mother's duty had deprived her husband of the child she had borne him, it was characteristic of Trillis that she did not take refuge from her accusing heart in the stress of circumstance, Hugh's acquiescence in the sacrifice, or her own high dreams of a duty above the claims of nature. She had sinned wilfully, but, knowing that mistakes often have severer penalties than faults, she accepted her pain without question or excuse.

She could see the lights moving along the Indiana shore, and occasionally heard faintly the shouts of the searchers. Her ear strained, against reason, for the

sound of guns or of the great church bell that was to announce the finding of the child and Brother Laurence. And sometimes she prayed, with a curious sense of futility, for their restoration.

When the night was waning, and the challenge of the cocks came from near and far — the voices of watchmen upon the walls of Time — the little, bent figure of Sister Drusia stole in between herself and Sister Bena, who uttered an exclamation of surprise, for, when she had left the village for the island, Sister Drusia, prostrated by the news of Helen's disappearance, had lain unconscious upon a bed in Sister Ermengarde's room at the schoolmaster's house. Now she moved briskly, and she spoke joyously.

"Come to the house and rest, Sisters. The child will be found, she is safe and well. She will be found!" she cried.

"How know you, Sister?" Bena asked.

"It is the strangest thing, I can not tell you how it was; something told me. God has need of the little one for a while, and He will restore her. Is it not the strangest thing? And He sent the message to me — to me, Sisters!"

Her thin sweet voice seemed to sing in triumph, and Bena, who had never before depended upon anything but her own perceptions and sound judgment, suddenly, for the first time since she had been one of them, accepted the general Rappite belief in the intercourse of the Heavenly Powers with mortals.

Drusia's beaming wonder was reflected from her own face, and, putting her arm around Trillis, she said in her rare tone of authority:

"Come, I will not permit you to stay longer here."

Trillis arose, and the two frail old sisters supported her up the bank. But the compliance could not last; the voice of the river was like the cry of her child in her ears. She stopped and moaned:

"Oh, Sisters, I am childless! I did not deserve that blessing. I have faced God to-night, and I am afraid of Him. He will punish me; He can not be just and spare me!"

Shrinking a little from this wild grief, Bena withdrew herself and answered patiently:

"We know that the child is to be restored. Let us go, then, to the house, like decent and seemly women, and await His pleasure."

Drusia put her hand upon Trillis' arm with a touch that was both tender and reverent.

"Is she yours, Sister? How strange! I have sometimes guessed that. But you are to have her again; she is to be restored. It is God who has need of her — think of that! How strange!" she repeated.

"Come," Bena insisted; "I hear the dip of oars. It is Brother Hugh returning from the other side. He should not find us here."

At these words resolve crystallized for Trillis.

"I will remain, then. I will meet him and tell him that Helen was our child."

Engrossed in her own feelings, she had not considered how this resolution would affect her companions, and was not prepared for the stiffening of Sister Bena's little figure nor the hardening of her voice.

"You are a headlong and ungoverned woman," she said harshly. "Even the love of a husband and a child has not chastened you or taught you the balance between passion and duty."

Trillis made no reply, except to turn again to the river, where the form of a boat, dim as a shadow, was materialized by the sound of oars. Perhaps the day and night of unwonted emotional strain had weakened Sister Bena's power of self-restraint; perhaps she saw that self-revelation was the last defense she could set up between George Rapp and all that threatened him in Trillis' contemplated act. She straightened her figure, and said in a tone, impressive from its very gentleness and restraint:

"Love that asks and plans for its own indulgence is not pure; nor is a temporary sacrifice proof of its quality. True love can renounce for ever and a day; it can sit beside the springs and never drink; serve the board and eat nothing; watch always, pray always, and be content when forgotten or ignored. Years are nothing to it; change does not touch it; it does not hunger, does not wait — it gives!"

The soft voice swelled, the beautiful old face was illuminated from within. Trillis, with her old, im-

petuous energy, opening her arms with quick warmth of feeling, cried, "Sister!" Then, ere she had quite closed them about the frail figure, or expressed the womanly sympathy that moved her, a new and deeper impulse seized her. She slid softly to her knees and kissed the hem of Sister Bena's dress.

"Dear Saint," she whispered, "does love mean that? Sacrifice, silent, content, for a lifetime?"

Sister Bena's emotion was spent. She was frightened at the cost of victory, and turned toward the house, her arms folded upon her breast. Trillis followed obediently, the old influences at work upon her will. If Helen were safe, all would be as it had been. There need be no sacrifice of high interests, no breaking of old ties — A dew-wet spray of a swinging vine touched her cheek.

In that moment of spent force, spirit and intellect left her unguarded, and nature took her in hand. The swift, moist touch upon her flesh thrilled her with the memory of a kiss. Hugh's, fierce with young feeling? Or the light, sweet kiss of her child? She did not know. All the woman in her leaped to the defense of this precious, long-renounced privilege, — to be wife to her husband, mother to her child. With a half-laugh of shame and apology, she turned and ran down the slope toward the river. The skiff had reached the shore, and a man was stooping in the act of tying it to the landing stake.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE DEATH OF BROTHER LAURENCE

There must be something,
Above or below,
Somewhere unseen
A mighty bow,
A hand that tires not,
A sleepless eye
That sees the arrow
Fly and fly;
One who knows
Why we live — and die.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

Upon the morning of the day on which he disappeared from the island, Brother Laurence was in the cedar thicket behind the tomb of the Daventrys. He was digging at the foot of a little group of trees whose roots ran under the sandstone foundations. He had begun before it was light, and now the pinkish dawn of the autumn morning brightened slowly to full day, and his task was not done. The lantern, whose feeble light he no longer needed, burned low, and its odor poisoned the sweet, balsamic perfumes, and the fresh smell of the new-turned earth. He was feeble, and whenever the intolerable aching of his back compelled him to rest, he peered through the

cedars anxiously, in fear of meeting eyes that watched his labors.

"What is that?" he cried, hearing the caw of a crow, and seeing him alight near by and turn inquisitive eyes upon him. Brother Laurence was seized by the ghost of an Old-World superstition, one which he had heard in childhood at Rosenthor.

"There," he exclaimed, shrinking back into the shadows, "there is the devil's spy come to watch me and to bear tales to his master. Yet this is not the devil's work. I am going to restore it all; not one coin nor one paper is missing. Let him watch an he will," he said more quietly, and resumed his digging.

When he paused, his broken mind wandered from his task, and presently, dreaming of other things, he sank slowly downward, and, leaning against the twisted cedar trunks, fell instantly asleep. An hour later he awoke with a cry of fear.

"He has found it again! O Christ, he has found it again!"

But returning hope prompted him to search further, and he threw himself upon his knees and dug frantically with his bare hands. The earth had not yet been softened by tillage, and only the energy of madness could have nerved the long white wasted hands to make an impression upon it. As he dug, he came upon the spot where the soil, which had but recently been broken up by his own spade, yielded easily, and he threw it out from under his hands as an

animal throws earth backward with its claws. When the impetus of fear failed him, he sat back as an animal might have sat upon its haunches, and his deep eyes, burning with wild and painful light, turned upward to the skies.

"O God! O Jesus, the pitiful! Grant that it be not gone! Otherwise I die in shame. Oh, let me not, let me not die in shame! Grant me to restore it! Grant me that they may say at the mouth of my grave, 'He never wronged us!' God! I claim it! I have served Thee; I gave up my wife and child to follow Thee; I have borne without murmur the life Thou didst appoint me, even this which Thou didst permit! Oh, pity me, and let me find it here!" he prayed, and fell to digging again.

In a few moments his fingers touched the thing he sought. Trembling, murmuring broken words of gratitude, he uncovered it at last,— an oblong box ornamented with dull brass work. It was heavy, and the frail old man bent under its weight. He wrapped it in the ample skirts of his coat, and set off with it to the slough, which he crossed in a skiff, and took the nearest way to Harmonie.

He stumbled rather than walked. The fences he climbed were like mountains in the way, it took so much strength to mount them, dizzy and shaken; so much courage to drop on the other side, overborne by the weight he carried. Being wholly absorbed in one clear purpose he did not attempt to conceal him-

self; but no one saw him. He entered the village, crossed several gardens, and came into the green close about the church.

The Sabbath quiet of it soothed his excitement; his lips were white by now, his face splotched with spots of congested purple, his eyes glowing dimly through the film of failing sight.

"Where's you going, Bruvver?" a silvery voice called to him, and a yellow-haired child stood in his way and looked up at him from a pair of strangely blue eyes. He stopped to study the little face. The child hung her head on one side, as a too-heavy blossom droops upon its stem, and continued to smile up at him with a bewitching, sidewise glance that set the dimples playing in her cheeks and chin; but it was only the blue of the eyes that Brother Laurence saw, and his failing mind was carried by it back many years and to a foreign country.

"You have Leah's eyes," he said. "Did Leah send you?"

"I just came my own self," Helen replied; "and I will go with you."

She advanced with her customary decision and reached for his hand. He gave it, accepting her as a celestial messenger, and led her into the vast cellar of the church. The semi-darkness and the strange odors interested Helen; she did not know fear, and she welcomed every new experience.

They crossed the cellar to a cell built in the thick

stone walls, and from a crevice in its back he took a great key and unlocked a low iron door hidden in the gloom. It opened upon the very blackness of darkness, but the child had gone beside him some distance before she began to protest.

"Jus' take me back where it's light," she said, without a question of his obedience. "Helen not likes this dark."

"No," he answered, "but we are coming to the light."

But the darkness seemed to thicken; a deadly cold struck to their vitals; something was beating at Helen's ears; rough edges of stone bruised her feet, and the strange brother was panting and swaying from one side to the other of the narrow passage, and threw her too often against the rough wall which was cold with oozing moisture. Even her decision of character was enfeebled by the awful place; she could not cry out, she could no longer protest, but stumbled on, her lips compressed in endurance, her heart bursting with its unuttered cry for help.

The underground passage from the church to the granary was not long, counted by yards, and it came to an end in the root-cellar. Here there was light, and fascinating heaps of familiar things in unfamiliar abundance. Helen would gladly have lingered, but Brother Laurence hurried her up the stairs to another vast, light, sweet-smelling place, equally interesting; in which, also, he refused to linger, but

led her to another stairway reaching up and up, an altogether impossible distance for little feet already weary. She seated herself upon the second step.

"Helen no climb any more," she announced with finality.

"But I can not leave you here. It was not taken from here," Brother Laurence argued in distress. Oh, why did this angel guide, sent him by Leah, threaten to change a plan that could not be changed? Had he not always meant to restore it to the safe? Anything short of that was failure. His eyes were like prayers, and interpreted themselves to the blue orbs looking up at him. At his urging, Helen reconsidered.

"You could carry me," she said gravely, getting up and lifting her arms. Already tottering under the weight of the box, he took her up and struggled, panting and swaying, to the top, where his knees gave way, and they sank to the floor. She shook herself free from the nerveless old arm with a peal of sweet laughter.

"What a funny thing, to fall up stairs!" she commented, when he lifted himself painfully upon his elbow. She added: "You's a shaky ol' man. I guess I better would help you." So, grunting and puffing out her cheeks with the effort, she strained at his arms. He, believing her an angel sent to help him, felt a new strength at her touch, and rose and led her to a little room at the end of the granary.

He turned when they entered it and pushed the heavy door to behind him.

The sisters spoke of Helen as one who was "light on her feet." She had that half-dancing, half-quivering motion that belongs to the child of nervous temperament, who is at the same time well and happy. Standing just inside the door in this bird-like attitude, with the sun-rays from the high dusty window pouring upon her curls, she looked like an aureoled angel poised for flight.

Brother Laurence, as the door closed, turned his failing gaze upon her.

"It is done," he whispered. Her bright head scintillated and wavered in his sight, her tiny figure grew to mighty proportions. "O Angel of God!" he cried in a voice that echoed through the vast building, "it is done!"

His strength failed in that exultant cry, and he sank slowly to the floor. There was no struggle, no convulsion, no grasping after life. When his body had relaxed beside the closed door he was sleeping as placidly as a child.

Helen had been surprised at his cry, not frightened. What could one so sheltered and wrapped about in adoring love know of fear? Nor did his sudden falling asleep disturb her; she turned away and amused herself with the examination of the little room. There were only the iron cupboard built into the wall, and the window too high for her

to look from it, the closed door, the prone figure of Brother Laurence, and the box within the circle of his arm.

She was reduced at last, since every object of interest in the room was exhausted, to sitting down beside him to await his awakening.

"Helen will be good and let the poor ol' Bruvver rest," she resolved.

But time is long to a restless child who is "being good," and in five minutes she was trying to awaken him, as if by accident, with various noises. She kicked her heels upon the floor, softly at first, then with growing energy, until the ache of the blows overcame the pleasure in the sound. Then she sang, with gathering volume of her piping voice until she was weary of this also.

"Helen not likes you to sleep so long," she said, with courteously restrained reproof, and tried new devices for awaking him,— mewing like a cat, barking like a dog, and imitating other animals whose cry she knew. But Brother Laurence slept on, unmindful of everything.

"I'll just scare him good!" she said, with a little malicious smile, and began a series of growls and snarls, fearful in intention at least; and was presently so frightened by them and the vision of the wild animals that her imagination conjured from them, that she fell silent and crept fearfully under the skirts of his coat.

"Oh, please wake up! Helen wants you to," she whispered, laying her lips to his ear.

When this failed to arouse him she drew away, hurt and puzzled. Never in her love-sheltered experience had any one been deaf to her appeals. She sat, with drooping head, trying to think it out; gradually the quiet overcame her, and she nestled against Brother Laurence, and, with her bright head upon his chest, fell asleep.

But, weary as she was, the child must wake at last to silence and loneliness. When she sat up and saw, instead of the dainty white chamber at the cottage, this bare, chill room, and, instead of Sister Drusia's adoring face, the ghastly countenance of the dying man, her fortitude fled, and she threw herself against the door, shrieking with mingled fear and anger. Her cries awaking only terrifying echoes, she returned to Brother Laurence, to call into his ear, to tug at his arms, and finally to drag his heavy head to her lap, when she pleaded with all her blandishments that he would wake and take her home.

The sunlight which had been companionship, ceased to come in at the little window, and the room filled with shadows from which the face of Brother Laurence shone white and strange. Some dim and formless ideas of death came into her mind and she shrank away from the dying man and cowered against the door in silence.

But His angels that have always charge over little

children remembered this one. A star swam into the little square of sky and Helen hushed her cries and watched it grow and brighten, until presently it seemed to glide toward her down a long path of gold, and at last to hang in the little window a great globe of warm and tender light. And when she felt something soft upon her cheek, though it may have been only one of her own tears, she took it for an angel's kiss and, comforted, fell asleep with a smile upon her lips.

Morning found her weak and chilled. Forgetting her fears of the night before, she crept close to Brother Laurence, and patting his cheek she urged:

"You better wake up now, it's morning."

But when the sun shone into the room again even her infantile intelligence shrank from the change the night had wrought in him; his face was livid, his blackened, froth-flecked lips hung open, and his breathing was loud and stertorous. Helen crept to the farthest side of the Strong Room and crouched under the window.

But she was a child of resources, fertile in devices for doing as she wished and with long practice in getting her own way in spite of difficulties. The box within the circle of Brother Laurence's arm caught her attention; and, whether she reasoned out a way of escape through it, or was led by some good angel to do so upon impulse only, she dragged the heavy box — after a long struggle and many failures — to

the window. Climbing upon it she found herself still below the level of the sill; but clinging to the rough stones of the wall, she was able to grasp the iron bars, and so drew herself up and looked out upon the poultry yards beneath the granary walls, where Dummer Hans was mustering his white flock for the morning's journey to the river pastures.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### RESTORATION

We who by shipwreck only find the shores
Of divine wisdom, can but kneel, at first.

LOWELL.

"*A night is past, the morning is come, and a step is made nearer our end; our time runs away, and the joys of Heaven are our reward.*"

The cry of the Rappite watchman sounded up and down the streets of the village; weary brothers, returned from the night-long search for Brother Laurence and the child, heard it vaguely as they were falling asleep. The sisters, their wholesome, ruddy faces blanched by anxiety, arose at its summons and dropped on their knees to pray for the restoration of the lost ones. Father Rapp heard it, and, rising, went out into his garden, and knelt beside the Gabriel Stone to press his appeal for the friend of his manhood and for the little helpless creature whom he had deprived of natural rights. His heart smote him for this act; but his soul looked serenely upon it, justifying it by high responsibilities and that very authority whose divine origin was attested by the footprint upon the Gabriel Stone.

Brother Hanno, lame from his recent injury, had not taken part in the search for Brother Laurence and Helen. But the general excitement, the shifting of interest from himself, or the restlessness of the old soldier's spirit when all was activity, had worked a miracle with his bruised ankle. He had hobbled about the rooming-house upon it, and more than once in the night he had descended to the street to ask news. He had not slept well, being haunted by dreams of a child crying in distress, or Brother Laurence calling upon him for help from some far, inaccessible region of danger. The watchman's cry came into his chamber at one of his moments of semi-consciousness, and seemed to explode at his very ears.

"Lord!— Devil!— O damn!— Damn! and you will have it!" he spluttered, starting up in his bed and glowering at the universe. "Every fool knows when morning comes! And as for the joys of Heaven, who knows how to pick his bottle that has not been drunk on many vintages? What will these poor Rappites do with the joys of Heaven? They will shut them up in the cupboard and write 'Forbidden' across the door, as they do with those of earth. *Our time runs away!* Well, yes, but it flies! And here am I, Band-master Tauffé, of blood and wishes, slowly turning into a frozen nun! 'Tis the case of the horse that has grazed with donkeys so long that he brays in his sleep."

He paused in his soliloquy, stricken by the remem-

brance of the calamity that had befallen the Harmonists. Yesterday he had been melted with pity, strangely softened and chastened by the common grief; to-day he was full of revolt, and reckless. He limped down the stairs and out into the quiet street. "Sleep, thickheads!" he snarled, as he looked at the curtained windows or glanced up at still smokeless chimneys.

The yellow walls of the stone granary shone golden in the early sunshine; the red roof-tiles glowed with rich tints of crimson and mahogany. Against the blue, mysterious sky of morning, the whole building stood out in its dignity of great proportions and simple lines. High in the end toward him, in the triangle of sloping roof and peaked wall, a little window was smitten with the light until it blazed like an enormous gem. It caught his attention, stirred his imagination, drew and held him by some dim suggestion. Now Brother Hanno, himself a materialist by nature, had spent many years in a community of spiritists. He yielded unconsciously to the psychologic disturbance, and when the thought of Brother Laurence came into his mind in connection with the shining window, he lingered to gaze at it, pondering upon the mystery.

A growing sound, made up of peepings and chirrups, the whir of wings and the muffled stir of feathers abstracted his attention, and he stood aside that Dummer Hans might pass with his white flocks to the

river pastures. To his surprise the fowl-herd stopped, and, with all his procession thus halted by his sudden movement hovering around him, he stepped back to Brother Hanno's side and peered into his face. The sharp features, the small, bird-like eyes, the loose boyish figure, clad in its smock of white linen, did not form a personality agreeable to the band-master. He shrank, as simple unregenerated natures do, from physical abnormalities, and at this moment, when he was already beginning to feel the reaction from mysterious things, he blazed with anger, and cried harshly:

"Be gone, fool! Take your squawking old women where you are going; there are geese enough in Harmonie when these are on pasture!"

Dummer Hans turned obediently; then, with some momentary stirring of intelligence, came back and murmured, as if in excuse:

"The angel is there. But if one climbs to the bright window, one must take heed; it is high."

"High? *Saperlot!* My soul! And that is the wisdom of an idiot! But stay! 'There are truffles where the sow roots,' and news in his babble. He has climbed that wall, of course, and carried the box and what pleased his fancy from that same little window. Well, knowledge meets one round the corner, and here is a thing worth learning."

The new train of thought drove out of his mind the mysterious attraction of the little window, which

did not recur to him for several hours. Limping into the street again he met Brother Jung Scheller rushing to the Great House, and stopped him and asked the news.

"There is none," gasped Jung. "Oh, there must be news soon! One can not bear it! Why have we not found the lost ones? God looks away from us; we are not good enough!"

"Speak for yourself, sputterer," cried Hanno hotly. "Where will He find better ones than some of the women of Harmonie? I met Dummer Hans but now and he was munching a frosted cake for his breakfast; Sister Hilda had taken the pains to make it white because the poor innocent likes it so. No, Brother, there are some whom He must remember. Is there no news?"

"No, no, I tell thee! Otho Rapp returned this morning to the island for brandy and blankets. God grant him to use them! And Sister Bena believes that Sister Drusia has had a vision in which it was promised that the child is to be found to-day."

"*Saperlot!* But the itch will spread to the castle at last. Bena has ever sense enough in her own head and no need to listen to dreamers. At what hour are the lost to be found, and where?"

"That Drusia did not ask; it was enough that all comes right at last."

"Bah!" said Hanno petulantly. "Women and geese feel the storm coming, but know not from what

quarter the wind blows it. Here we have to beat the woods all day, perhaps, when a simple question had saved hours of labor!"— which remark may be accepted as proof that Hanno was not so free from dependence upon the supernatural as he believed. As for the Harmonists generally, they accepted the assurance of Drusia's dream or vision with entire faith. The searching parties formed again, and left the village in cheerful confidence; and the forenoon passed hopefully.

But when at noon some of the elder and weaker brothers returned without news and wearied, anxiety came back and settled more and more heavily upon them. As the day waned the sky clouded, and a southwest wind, swift and fierce, swept shrieking through the village, and awoke shuddering thoughts of what an old man and a tender child must suffer if left all night to its mercy. The contracted horizon and chill, windy gloom of the late afternoon seemed to shut them in with fear.

At four o'clock the church bell began to ring, and word went about that all who were in the village should gather at a service of prayer for the restoration of the lost ones. By this time many of the searchers had returned, and weary, splashed with mud from the swamps, or dusty and hung with burs and clawed seeds, they came into the church, answering the inquiring looks of the sisters with sad shaking of their heads.

Sister Bena came in, her Rappite dress in the daintiest order, her cheeks slightly flushed, her deep-set, beautiful eyes blazing with the light of excitement and defiance. She carried her head well up and held herself proudly, for she understood that many who had accepted the assurance of Drusia's vision were now doubting it, and, more convinced than before, she was waiting eagerly for the moment which was to justify her housemate, and glorify the love that had been between them. Trillis drooped beside her, her splendid, glowing youth eclipsed, her features sharpened, her eyes sunken and dulled by grief. Sorrow had had its cruel way with her for many hours now, had raised her up to cast her down, had shown her every phase of suffering, so that she might henceforth know them all, from pangs of keenest torture to the most numbing pressure of inarticulate woe.

She sat now, strangely bent and feeble, the glow and sparkle and quick movement that had been the expression of her young vitality faded to a gray dejection. The fierce emotions of last night were no longer possible for her. The woman who had calmly measured life and sorrow and the future, who had faced the death of her child and had acquiesced in it as the justice of an offended God; the woman who had swerved between conflicting claims, who, at the suggestion of a caress, had thrilled to the double call of wifehood and motherhood, were equally remote from her now.

The man who came in the skiff and whom she had run to meet with her revelation and her confession of love trembling upon her lips, was not Hugh, but Otho Rapp. She had turned back to her father's house smarting under the satiric cruelty of fate; she had even defied it, declaring that she would yet claim her rights, though they after all proved to be nothing more than the right to pity as the mother of a dead child.

Sister Bena's faith had infected her at times, not to produce its counterpart in serene patience, but to stir her to feverish hopes lagging with the wearying of the will, and, as the day wore on, departing altogether and leaving her to the apathy of exhausted feeling.

Father Rapp, pale, but strong in the faith of one whom God has tried, but never yet forsaken, led the prayers. The brothers, joining him one by one, waxed more hopeful with the energy of their own pleading; while the quavering voices of the sisters, led by Sister Bena's confident tones, gathered strength as their appeal, soaring upward, revived their fainting hearts. Peace settled upon the congregation; faith was in the midst of them; and a holy calm filled the church where these simple trusting creatures awaited the striking of the hour of God.

In the green yard at the back of the church, Brother Hanno sat and sulked upon the basement

door. The leaves of the elm trees were dropping like rain, the long dry grass was swept by the wind in restless waves, the sky was dark with torn masses of bleak clouds; it was not a day to make a seat upon a cellar door, where the wind could get at one at pleasure, but Hanno drew his short legs under him — the injured ankle, protected by the skirt of his Rappite coat, held carefully over it — and found a grim comfort in discomfort. The wind tossed his curly gray locks into a distracted frame for his altered face, for all the pleasant wrinkles about his eyes and apple-red cheeks seemed to turn upside down, to make drooping lines of dejection, matching his spirit.

"Put your foot on quicksand and your faith on woman," he grumbled. "Yet one would have said that Sister Drusia had sense. But the day is gone, and the vision a lie. Why does not Father Rapp get us a revelation? His prove themselves."

A little later he lifted his head with the energetic motion of a new idea.

"Black Master! but I have one myself! The little window that shone so strangely, and Dummer Hans' babble of an angel — they mean something!"

At this moment three weary, mud-splashed, dejected figures came into view: Hugh, Theodor, and Otho Rapp were returning from their fruitless search of the Illinois shore. They joined Brother Hanno and at his suggestion went into the cellar of the church.

The door of the underground passage standing ajar gave color to Hanno's belief that the child might have wandered through it into the granary, and have been afraid or unable to find her way back again.

The underground passage was dark and close, its floor and sides slippery with the ooze which dripped now and then from its low roof. Neither Theodor nor Otho had ever before entered it, and Hugh only on that occasion in his boyhood when he had led Major Daventry through it to the defense of the fort against the raiders. They found the door opening into the root-cellar of the granary ajar, also; and, after examining the great gloomy room and finding nothing, they ascended to the next floor, and searched behind the tiers of boxes and the bales, with a growing sense of horror. The stair led directly to the Strong Room, with the great key hanging in the lock of the closed door. Hugh turned the knob, but met some stubborn soft resistance when he would have opened the door. Its yielding thrilled him with a subtle awe and premonition of sorrow. Inside the room a yellow light played upon walls and floor, the pale reflection of a brilliant sunset that was closing the tempestuous afternoon. In its light, crouching under the window, her little body huddled in a strange, unchildlike posture of suffering, was Helen.

She recognized Hugh, rose, and tottered toward him with outstretched arms. A mighty pang of pity, love, and resentment wrung his heart as he snatched

her to his breast. She nestled against it with a little murmur of content, and feebly patted his cheek with her tiny clammy hand. He gave one quick, shuddering glance at the long, dark figure behind the door, and rushed away with the child in his arms.

The congregation at the church sat tranquil, as those who wait and doubt not. Suddenly, with the startling distinctness of a voice, the sound of rapping, solemn and measured, broke the silence. Brother Martin, who sat near the trap-door leading into the cellar, arose and opened it. There was a pause; then the yellow head of Otho Rapp, walking slowly and backward, appeared in the opening. Then, the delicate face of Theodor von Korassel, whose stricken look prepared them for the slow rising into view of the long, dark burden which they carried between them. There was not so much as the sound of a deeply-drawn breath as they turned into the aisle, bore the body of Brother Laurence to the altar, and laid it down at the feet of Father Rapp.

The awed silence held an instant longer; then, his strong face broken into lines of grief, his shoulders heaving with the soundless sobs of an old man, the leader of the Harmonists sank on his knees at the side of his dead friend.

"Is it thus you come back to us, my Brother?" he cried, in the bitterness of sudden bereavement. "I had thought to present you to Him, first of all!

Where is the promised triumph of that hour, and you not there? You are gone down into death, and He comes not!" he complained.

A wail, long and tremulous, echoed his cry from the benches where the sisters were the first to catch the note of his despair. Desolation swept them like a wind from storm-clouds, threatening the wreck of faith, the loss of a promised glory, the crumbling of the great rock that had been their shadow in a weary land. This half-articulate cry swelled from bench to bench, until the brothers, weak from physical weariness, caught its spirit and bowed their heads in the submission of despair.

From the back of the church came a clear sweet voice, that seemed to hold back scorn and admonition only from a divine pity.

"*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*" cried Sister Bena.

"Amen!" said Brother Fabian, with an accent of unmoved faith.

Father Rapp lifted his head,— in that instant he had throttled doubt and rebellion. His spirit shone from his eyes like a sword unsheathed.

"*Thy will, not mine, be done!*" he cried.

There was more of the strong resolution of the warrior ready for action than of submission in his tones; but, with the gesture of indomitable force that accompanied them, they were an instantaneous stimulus to all those docile hearts that hung upon his own.

Their doubts passed, like a wandering wind, and they sat, still awed, still sorrowing, chastened, yet believing, and prayed silently for the soul that had gone out from among them.

Father Rapp stood for some moments, his hand trembling upon the cold hand of his friend, the tears shimmering between him and the peaceful face; then he asked of Theodor:

"Where has he been?"

Theodor stood silent. His face was more pitiful than that of the dead, for there was no peace in it; it was the battle-ground, rather, of cruel and devastating emotions. Otho Rapp, from some intuition that forbade him to speak, stepped down from the altar and seated himself on a bench. Father Rapp kept his place beside Brother Laurence, Theodor stood at his father's feet. It was long before the stricken young man could find courage for speech; finally, his gaze upon his father's face, as if he drew strength from it, he began:

"We found my father in the Strong Room; he lay there dead, with this peace upon his face. He went there to restore the box of money which disappeared while in his custody soon after I came hither from Germany. He did restore it; for the child, Helen, crouched upon it, under the window, when we entered the room. Dummer Hans had told Brother Hanno she was in that room. She must have followed my father there. It was a painful

experience for so young a child, but I thank God that father did not die alone."

At this point, Theodor drew himself up, and a slight bitter smile played over his delicate face.

"You see, I am a coward. I put off the thing I have to tell you. It is that *I* took the money from the Strong Room on the night after the finding of the Gabriel Stone."

He paused and stood silent, with a shuddering sense of the contempt that must be pouring upon him from all those simple, honest listeners. He seemed to feel it scorching him like flames. There was no sound, no stir of indignation, no hiss; he held his breath to hear the gathering of their anger, and he braced himself to bear it.

"Go on, my Brother."

George Rapp spoke so low that no one else heard, so tenderly that Theodor, nerved for scorn, was seized by sudden trembling under the shock of kindness. He lifted his head and looked out over the church,— the faces swam before his eyes; but somehow there was no anger, no contempt. The surprise broke his harsh artificial manner and restored the natural tones of his sweet persuasive voice.

"I can never make you understand," he continued; "but I think I was not a — not quite a thief at heart. My desire to reconstruct Harmonie was an honest one; I believed that there were weaknesses and mistakes which I was chosen to make sound and right.

I, too, had my dreams of a perfect social structure. I, too, thought myself the chosen instrument of reforms — I, too, had a gospel for man. The discovery of the Gabriel Stone ended my influence and left me helpless. I had ideals, but not opportunity; followers, but not money. My father, trusting me, counted the contents of the box in my presence. The temptation to take it for the purpose of founding a new community with it seized me at a moment of disappointment and rage against fate. I told myself that the money had been earned for the regeneration of society, that in the possession of your leader it was certain to be mistakenly applied, and that it would only weld a little stronger the chains in which, it seemed to me, he held his followers. The criminal has always his excuse. I had mine, and at the time I believed in it.

"I do not know whether, under other circumstances, I might not have seen my deed as a crime, repented of it, and made restitution. As it was, my father discovered the theft almost at once. The discovery seemed to work a sort of madness in him. While he hated the crime, and abhorred the infidelity to the community, yet, such was his tenderness for me, he could not bear that I should accuse myself of it. He found the box and hid it. When I went away to Philanthropia, it was in his possession, but the thought of it followed me like any ghost of crime. The thought was with me in Europe, also. I dragged

it after me wherever I went, as a prisoner his ball and chain. With such a burden, what could I do but fail? Slowly hope and ambition died in my heart, and I returned to Harmonie, to my father, drawn back by conscience, to live my broken life in the presence of my crime and the ruin it had wrought.

"Many times the box was in my possession, but never for long; my father always found it again and hid it away before I had restored it. When the haunting sense of crime, and the pose of an innocent man while I knew myself so guilty, became unbearable, I would search for the box once more, determined to end that form of agony; but he watched me and foiled me. I can not tell you how many times this hideous drama was played between us. And this is the end!"

There followed a tense silence in which Theodor, panting like one who has spent all his strength, faced the congregation of the Rappites and could not speak. The brothers bowed their heads, the sisters turned away that they might not see his agony. Presently he was able to continue:

"On the day before my father disappeared, I begged him to let me confess and set us both free. It was the first time we had ever put the hideous secret between us into words. He was more tender, more reasonable, more like himself than at any time since my return to the island. But he did not consent. He temporized, saying that at the end of

the week he would be ready, and would no longer oppose my wish. I see now that he anticipated death, and hoped to restore the box himself, so that I might not be suspected. He dragged himself with his last failing powers to the granary, and died in the effort to hide my crime."

Theodor, his story told, awaited the bolt of punishment. Father Rapp leaned over the dead to touch him softly upon the shoulder.

"Neither do we condemn you, Brother."

Then, to his followers, still sitting breathless, he said:

"This is the son of one who never wronged us, who bore his sorrows patiently, who gave all his heart desired for the cause in which he believed. Him whom Laurence von Korassel could forgive, we shall not blame. Him whom Laurence loved like this, we shall cherish. You have no reckoning with us, Brother; take courage, and sin no more."

But Theodor did not hear the generous promise. Unnerved by the first words of forgiveness, he had slipped to his knees. His face had fallen upon the breast of his father, and, by some miracle of the ever-renewing power of good in the human heart, he saw what that father's love had been. His sin and his abasement, the grim unnatural struggle between them, the secret angers and dark suspicions that had obscured that love, disappeared, and left, fresh and vital as in the days of his childhood, the old, adoring,

idealizing worship of his own heart. With the sob of a wearied and comforted child that has found its own again, he clasped his arms about the still form of Brother Laurence and whispered:

"My father, O my father!"

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### LOVE'S TRIUMPH

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN BURROUGHS.

Pressing her little face into his breast, that the child might not be frightened by the darkness, and murmuring tender and soothing words as he ran, Hugh had carried Helen through the underground passage and the cellar, across the green yard behind the church, to the schoolmaster's house. Here, Sister Ermengarde was waiting with everything in readiness for the restoration of the lost ones. So that, long before the body of Brother Laurence had been carried into the church, his little comrade was being warmed and fed, and her experience, so full of terror and suffering, was already fading from her mind.

When the ominous rapping upon the trap-door had challenged the attention of the silent congregation, Trillis had scarcely been startled; even the rigid body and still face of Brother Laurence had made but a faint impression through her lethargy of spirit.

Theodor's high, unnatural tones she had not heeded, and she was dimly groping for a meaning in his reference to her child, when Sister Bena's nervous little fingers closed around her arm, and she was led out of the church.

"Hurry, hurry, the child is found!" Bena cried, as soon as they were outside.

Then, indeed, the long unnatural apathy fell away at a stroke. Trillis' heart leaped to her lips in a smothered shriek, while she sped down the street to the schoolmaster's house.

Helen, by this time, fed and comforted, was sleeping sweetly in Sister Ermengarde's arms.

"My child! Give me my child!" Trillis cried, swooping down upon the pair of quiet figures with a tigerish joy.

Hugh, passing through the hall on his return to the church, was arrested by the wild cry.

"My child! My child!" she repeated with unmistakable, revealing emphasis.

He pushed open the door and saw Trillis, with Helen in her arms, rocking her upon her bosom, and devouring the little inert body with wild kisses.

"O my darling! O my pretty one! O my baby daughter!"

She crooned the loving names, groping in her memory for new ones or repeating the old, seeking to ease her heart with their exaggeration. When she saw Hugh a momentary faintness overcame her, and

she sank on a chair, bowing herself over the child, pressing it still closer to her bosom, and not able to remove her eyes from the little face, even for him, nor to still love's tumultuous expression.

Hugh bent over her.

"Trillis," he said gently, "what did you say about the child?" Then, with a rush of fiercer feeling, he laid his hand upon Helen.

"Whose child is this?" he demanded.

"Yours, Hugh, and mine," she whispered with exquisite tenderness, lifting her head and beaming upon him with a face of ecstasy.

"Mine? Ours?" he cried, drawing back with a shock that passed quickly, for the fact in this revelation had lain so long just outside his consciousness that it was now easily accepted. The realization was instantly followed by a contrition so overwhelming that, hiding his face in his hands, he sank to his knees before the mother and child.

"And I knew nothing! Gave you up, Trillis! Renounced my child! Left it to others!"

"No, do not talk so, Hugh; it was not your fault. You must not suffer from that thought."

Trillis' tender voice and her soft indulgent gaze only made his chagrin the more intolerable.

"Suffer?" he cried; "I wish I might suffer! Have you not suffered? Alone in the hour when God ordains that the husband should support his wife! Alone in the anxiety and humiliation of secret moth-

erhood,— having to steal your holy mother-joys! Oh! Trillis, you must hate me!"

"Hate you, Hugh?" she leaned nearer, but dropped her eyes while she said, with a soft abstracted smile: "Could I hate him who gave me my child?"

She spread the little hand upon her palm.

"Look!" she continued, still speaking in that hushed and brooding tone that held his wild emotions in check. "See how these tiny fingers curl backward at the tips; and look at yours, Hugh! Here is a little brown mole on her temple at the edge of her hair, and there is another like it on your own!"

Her voice began to tremble from its impersonal tone, and ended in a burst of tender triumph.

"You never noticed these things, you never guessed; but she,— the darling,— made you love her for herself!"

"Yes," he answered, looking down at the pallid face upon Trillis' breast, and striving to adjust himself to the new claim of his little playmate.

In that moment when he had found her in the Strong Room, crouching under the window like some animal in a trap, the sudden, comprehensive vision of what she had suffered, imprisoned there with the dead, had provided him a most thorough preparation for the emotions of fatherhood. All the yearning tenderness, the protective instinct, the wrath of the primitive man that his own should suffer, had come to him in one fierce onset of feeling. With a heart

still tender from that experience, it was not difficult to accept the miracle of fatherhood, and very easy to accept a new tie promising to bind him the more closely to the woman he loved.

He still knelt before them, in a passion of repentance and self-censure. Trillis' illuminated face, bowed over Helen, her gracious woman's figure that seemed to curve around the little body upon her lap with inexpressible softness and tenderness of line, the bosom that pillowed the small head, the strong arms that shut her child into a sanctuary of love, made a picture so full of the power of this unsuspected relation that Hugh trembled before it. Trillis, as the mother of his child, was so high, so holy, that his poor love shrank abashed. He had an instant of poignant discouragement, for his was still a young man's passion, unable to reach in a moment the perfected and spiritualized development required by this new relation.

Trillis looked up, and, seeing the pain and longing in his face, and half-divining its source, withdrew one arm from the child, and, laying it tenderly upon his shoulder, drew him into the circle of her caress. Her action was more than half-maternal, but their eyes met as he bent to her embrace, and the preoccupying mother-passion yielded to another, so long held in check.

"Beloved," Hugh whispered, not boldly, as in the first wooing, but reverently, his hand trembling over

hers with a questioning tenderness, "will you come back to me?"

"Do you love me, Hugh?" she asked, still holding herself and the child a little away from him, tasting for the last sweet moment the joy of being wooed, while already yielding to the joy of being won.

"Take me, Trillis," he said, his voice shaking with emotion; "all that is of any worth in me is yours ——" But, because his words moved her with too fierce a joy, Trillis bent and kissed them from his lips.

Helen stirred, opened her blue eyes, so pitifully ringed with suffering, and smiled upon them. She put up her arms feebly, and clasped Hugh's neck with the one, Trillis' with the other. "Kiss Helen," she demanded with her old assertiveness of the petted child. The two pairs of lips met upon her mouth in a kiss that was a sacrament. The weak arms slid downward, and one little hand sought her father's and was enfolded in its clasp. She sighed contentedly, nestled into her mother's arms, and fell asleep while they watched her.

They still sat, bending together over their child, and already so initiated into the cares of parenthood that they talked in whispers in order not to disturb her, when Father Rapp entered the room. He did not look upon this picture with the contrition that had seized him when he had found Hugh and Trillis together in the church upon the day after the mar-

riage. That feeling had arisen from the generosity of conscious power,— this came from the resentment and defiance of conscious weakness. Then, he was the agent of divine authority; now, he was a man whose courage had waned, and whose mind was cowed by its own mistakes. Only his indomitable soul had strength for a struggle; under its impulse his eyes flashed blue and angry.

Hugh sprang up to meet that gaze, his own head lifted, a bluer and more flashing eye meeting the challenge of the leader of the Harmonists. It was youth and age confronting for a decisive struggle — experience, the wisdom of life, which is the proved knowledge of the vanity of all earthly things, pitted against youth with its one keen weapon,— hope.

"You will desert us then?" asked Father Rapp swiftly.

"We shall withdraw from the community," Hugh answered.

"You will destroy it, rather! Can we rear, educate, build from the ground up another youth to take the place for which we reared you? Without the quick brain and the quick blood of youth we are but a fraternity of old men, with no force in us but patience. You have done this for what? For a carnal passion, for a mere brute instinct that peoples the earth with those who, in their turn, are subject to lusts that devour and desires that lead to the abyss!"

In the eagerness of speech, Father Rapp renewed

the fire of his eloquence, and his hearers felt again the mastery of his strong spirit, but they did not wholly yield to it. While his words flowed over them, a stream of molten reproaches, arguments and pleadings, Hugh's arm encircled his wife and child, and Trillis' heart rejoiced in the manly firmness with which he insisted upon their right to follow the new master, Love.

Yet her heart was very tender toward the man, old before his time; when he turned at last to leave them, she laid her child in Hugh's arms and, casting her own about Father Rapp's bowed shoulders, she forced him tenderly into a chair, that she might fondle his knotted hands, and compel him to listen to her.

"O Father!" she cried, "let us love you still! We are your children; we can never get away from your teachings and the memory of what you have been to us; we shall be Rappites always and wherever we go. Let us take your love with us!"

He looked upon her, as she knelt before him, with relenting tenderness. Putting out a trembling hand, he laid it upon her head and said:

"May God bless you, Daughter!"

Spent by the long strain of the interview and the sorrow of defeat, he arose to leave them. Hugh, all his lifelong love for Father Rapp rushing back upon him and suffusing his soul with regret and yearning, stood in his way.

"Father," he said humbly, "bless me also."

With a smile of wistful tenderness, the old man lifted his hand.

"I can but love you both," he said, "and when He comes I shall say: 'Two who were our dearest and most promising are not here; forgive them their error, and count them, Lord, with us.'"

And he blessed them.

THE END

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